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Washtenaw Jewish News
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WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

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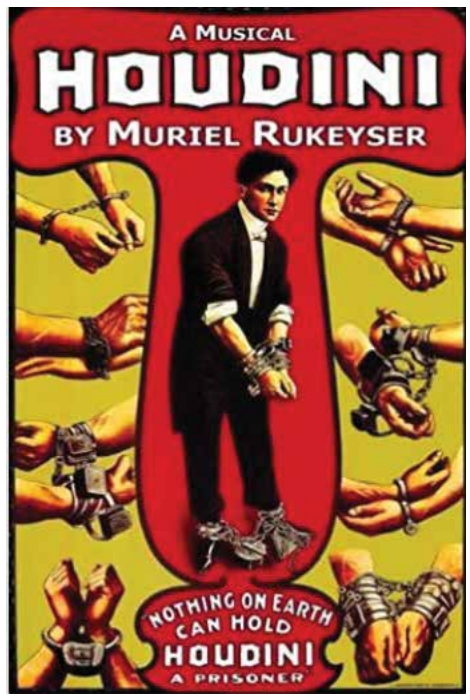
Locks, keys, freedom: Houdini makes a comeback in southeast Michigan

Elisabeth Däumer, special to the WJN

Ladies and Gentlemen — step this way and take your seats. You're in for an amazing show! Coming to a theater near you is the legendary escape artist Harry Houdini as imagined by Muriel Rukeyser, a prolific American author and among the most important post-WWII Jewish writers. First performed in 1973, with Christopher Walken as Houdini and Neva Small as Bess, the musical *Houdini* combines singing and dancing, comedy, and pathos.

While capturing Houdini's transformation from Hungarian-born Eric Weisz, son of a rabbi, to the most celebrated escape artist of all times, the musical dramatizes the tension between the escape artist who can break any lock and the man who is inescapably bound to his mother, to his wife Bess, and to the very myth he helped create. Along the way, the play challenges us to consider how we respond to gender inequality, racial bigotry, religious persecution, and the power of magic.

The musical's candid language and poem-songs will appeal to many, young and old,



though it's likely not for younger children. The song "Yes" invites us to abandon caution and open ourselves to surprise and the unknown: "Open your eyes, / Dream but don't guess. / Your biggest surprise / comes after yes." Another song, "Chains, Freedom, Keys," compels us to imagine the chains that imprison us and the keys to freedom in our reach, both as individuals and communities. In "I Make my Magic," Houdini reveals the sources of his magic as coming from

. . . forgotten things
Night and nightmare and the midnight wings
Of childhood butterflies—
And the darkness, the straining dark
Underwater and under sleep —

Houdini did his most dangerous exploit in Detroit, when, as a publicity stunt, he leaped from Belle Isle Bridge — handcuffed, chained, and leg-ironed — into the icy Detroit River. As legend has it, the river was frozen, and he entered it through a small hole in the ice. Rukeyser's musical devotes a gripping scene to Houdini's narrow escape from death. Twenty years later, in 1926, Houdini performed his last show in Detroit, even though he suffered from a burst appendix. He died a week later in Detroit's Grace Hospital.

To help us fight the doldrums of COVID, winter, and the multitude of "locks" that constrain us, Eastern Michigan University's Muriel Rukeyser Living Archive is putting on four public events dedicated to Houdini. Each event combines a staged reading of the play with lively conversation about Rukeyser and the great magician:

March 20, 2 p.m., Sponberg Theatre, Eastern Michigan University

March 24, 7 p.m., Riverside Arts Center, Ypsilanti, Michigan

March 26, 8pm., Matrix Theatre, Detroit, Michigan

March 27, 3pm., Matrix Theatre, Detroit, Michigan

Continued on page 8

Local artist wins Shmita Prize

Hannah Davis, special to the WJN

Idelle Hammond-Sass, a member of the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation and a local artist working in painting, sculpture, metal working, and jewelry making, has won the Shmita Prize contest in the Ritual Object category in the Shmita Project contest sponsored by Hazon.

This year in the Jewish calendar, 5782 (from September 6, 2021, to September 22, 2022), is shmita, a year where "God commands us to let the land rest, release debts, resolve disputes, and open our hands and hearts to those in need." The Shmita Project aims to reimagine this ancient tradition in an era when most of us don't live directly off the land or rely on the rhythms of the natural world in our lives. What does it mean to let the land rest when we don't interact with the land?

According to the Shmita Project, "The Shmita Prizes award artists and creatives — from all levels of experience and age groups

Renewing Shmita by Idelle Hammond-Sass

— for works of art that bring into focus the relevancy and application of shmita values in our contemporary world. These art works offer creative avenues with which to prepare for, mark, and engage with the shmita year."

Pieces were submitted in categories of Ritual Object, Fine Art, Film/Video, Performance Art/Music/Liturgy, and Written Word. A committee of artists, including an author, an actor, a musician, a museum research assistant, and a performance artist, judged the entries and selected the winners.

Idelle's piece is called "Renewing Shmita." It is made with hemispheres of wood surrounding a copper archway with a bowl on top, two candlesticks with the word "shmita" etched in English and Hebrew, and four small brass dishes: seven pieces in total, echoing the seventh year of shmita. The piece, Idelle says, was intended to help explore the creation of a personal shmita ritual. There are no pre-ordained uses for its parts, unlike the items on a Passover seder plate.

Idelle said she had to start by asking the question, "what is a ritual?" Key parts of shmita tradition involve not cultivating the land, and only eating food that can be foraged or that was stored from previous years. How to represent the idea of having enough to provide for your community for the whole year? This concept doesn't just have to apply to food: we sustain ourselves on many other things too. The brass dishes in the piece offer options for physicality, places to interact with your ritual, perhaps by putting items in them that represent a wish for abundance or "enough-ness" for the year.

The word "shmita" means "release," Traditionally this involved letting go of debts and obligations to others, but it could also be a very personal release: from assumptions, from workaholism, or from perfectionism. Idelle suggested setting an intention for the year of things you're ready to let go of. She intentionally chose to make the piece very open-ended, stating that it would be limiting

Continued on page 8

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From the Editor

Purim marks two years since the COVID 19 shutdowns, and with re-starting in-person gatherings, it is truly the season of our joy. But also the season of, I don't know what to call it, stress responses, forgetfulness, absent-mindedness: does "pandemic brain" cover it? If you are experiencing this too, I hope you will be easy on yourself and others.

Clare Kinberg

In planning with Rabbi Whinston and Rachel Levy for the March 20 "Reimagining 21st Century Jewish Community" get together, I came across the sponsors of ReBoot's Shavuot series (some people really plan ahead), featuring an all-night listen to Thelonious Monk's "'Round Midnight." The sponsors include LABA: A Laboratory for Jewish Culture; Jewish Emergent Network; Lab/Shul; The Kitchen; Romenu: Jewish Life Elevated; and several other organizations whose names themselves are filled with the joy of Jewish creativity.

I'm an optimist, but one of my students at the Reconstructionist congregation outdid me. He said, "I don't look at whether the glass is half full or half empty because I know the glass is refillable." How beautiful is that? Happy Purim. ■

WASHTENAW JEWISH NEWS

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An exchange of letters prompted by the Ann Arbor City Council resolution on antisemitism: Who is an antisemite?

Dear Clare:

I live not far away from the site of the weekly demonstration so heatedly rejected by the Ann Arbor City Council. As I was born and raised in Israel and went to war to defend it in 1973, I'd like to say a few words about that decision by the council. Walking past these demonstrators and talking to them, I never saw or heard any antisemitic proclamations. They are opposed to Israel's policy in the occupied West Bank. So am I. A few words about the profound difference between antisemitism and anti-Israeli protest are in order.

Unfortunately, Israel suffers from the presence of a small, but very active and vocal group of West Bank settlers and their sympathizers whose activities over the years included the mass murder of Muslims in prayer (Dr. Goldstein), the murder of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the murder of several West Bank Palestinian residents, including children, and daily pogrom-like attacks on Arab villagers in the West Bank, occupied by Israel since 1967, which range from violent attacks on them, to attacks on their livestock, fencing off their access to water, cutting down their olive groves and destroying their property.

Recently the so-called "Boys of the Hills" from an illegal settlement have attacked several Israeli human rights activists and sent them to the hospital. Sadly, this activity is often tolerated and even actively supported by IDF soldiers. A few days ago, such Israeli soldiers killed an 80-year-old Palestinian for the crime of protesting their rough handling at a road block near his home. Unfortunately for those soldiers, the man turned out to be an American citizen, and the U.S. State Department had demanded an explanation, rejecting the usual weak excuses put forward by the IDF.

As most residents of communities such as Ann Arbor wouldn't condone such terrorist activity, these "Boys of the Hills" and their supporters here try to muddy the water by making the preposterous claim that any protest against their activities is "Anti-Semitism."

The situation in the occupied West Bank is complicated, and we must not jump to conclusions, nor should we allow murderers and terrorists, Jewish though they may be, to tarnish a legitimate demonstration in Ann Arbor against their activities and against Israeli policy as Anti-Semitism. Many Israelis are bravely protesting and reporting the crimes committed by the Jewish settlers, taking a great risk in doing so. To me, these are the true heroes of Israel today.

I'd like to believe the council, and the mayor, are misguided rather than the supporters of Jewish terrorism, and fell for a right wing propaganda from an unexpected quarter. I do understand that those whose synagogue became the weekly target of these protesters are not happy to assume the role of Israel's representatives while they go about their worship and celebrate Jewish religious festivals. But perhaps it isn't such a bad thing to have your deeply held convictions challenged on occasion!

Moshe Tzalel Burns Park

Moshe,

Thank you very much for writing.

I share your deep opposition to the occupation and to Israeli government, settlers, and right-wing actions to further disenfranchise Palestinians with whom Jews must eventually (as soon as possible) share the land.

And I agree that there are profound differences between antisemitism and protests against Israeli policy, as you say.

However, signs that say "Jewish Power Corrupts" are antisemitic. Many signs the picketers hold have antisemitic messages. The picketers outside Beth Israel have "muddied the water" of legitimate protest with their choice to disturb religious practice and their antisemitism.

It is the picketers that made their choice to be antisemitic. One of their main organizers has publicly denied the facts of the Holocaust: he says there were no gas chambers, less than 6 million Jews died, and he proudly shook the hand of the man who wrote The Hitler We Loved & Why. How can someone who loved Hitler help the Palestinian cause?

The picketers' embrace and promotion of antisemitism cannot helpfully challenge American Jews to further consider their support of Israel policy of occupation and Palestinian disenfranchisement. The protesters severely muddy the water. The waters need to be cleared, and you could help, but not by defending the picketers.

I would hope that you, as someone who knows well what is happening in Israel, will raise your voice in support of Israelis who oppose the "Hilltop boys," the heroes who work for human rights and justice in Israel/Palestine ... but not in defense of a group that has chosen antisemitism.

I hope to continue this conversation with you.

Clare Kinberg, editor of WJN

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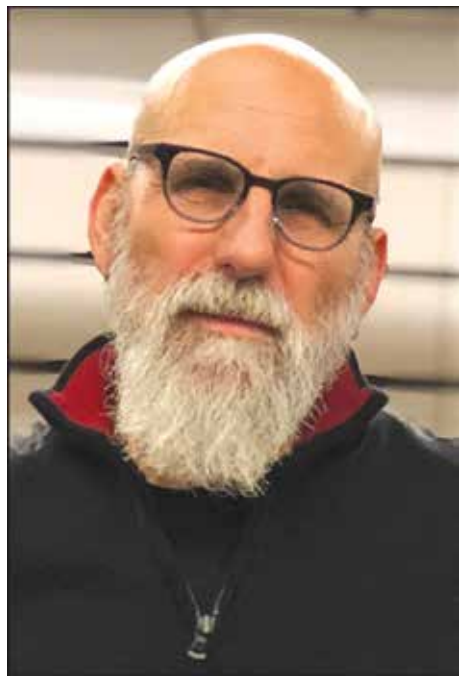
Shaul Magid on Meir Kahane's views on "exceptionalism"

Jillian Luciow, special to the WJN

Dr. Shaul Magid will deliver the 32nd David W. Belin Lecture in American Jewish Affairs, "'God Shed His Light on Thee': American and Jewish Exceptionalism in the Thought of Meir Kahane."

Magid, professor of Jewish Studies at Dartmouth College and Senior Kogod Research Fellow at the Shalom Hartman Institute of North America, will be delivering the



32nd David W. Belin Lecture in American Jewish Affairs in a hybrid event on April 7, 2022. His most recent book *Meir Kahane: The Public Life and Political Thought of an American Jewish Radical* was published by Princeton University Press in 2021, and his lecture will explore notions of American exceptionalism and Jewish exceptionalism in the diasporic and Zionist thought of Meir Kahane. He will show how Kahane valued American democracy and viewed America as exceptional while at the same time felt that America could not ultimately protect the Jews. Alternatively, Jews had their own exceptional status that made them unique among collectives, and needed to express that status in a variety of ways, including the establishment of a non-democratic and thus abnormal state. Jewish exceptionalism demanded continued Jewish abnormality, the "normalization" of the Jew viewed as abandoning Jewish exceptionalism.

Magid would like to introduce Meir Kahane as a figure who has been ignored by scholars but who contributed in interesting ways to postwar Jewish discourse, not only on questions of Jewish militancy and pride, but as a reactionary critic of American Jewish liberalism. After seven years of living in Kahane's head, Magid "can say that I really think I understand him. He was a fascinating and, like most radicals, a tragic figure. He failed miserably, and yet he does not disappear." His hope is to use Kahane to make a larger intervention into postwar American and Israeli Judaism and Jewishness, in this case referring to navigating the double exceptionalism that many Jews in America embody in different ways.

While Kahane's worldview is largely rejected, Magid hopes that his book and lecture demonstrate that it has dug some deep roots in the American Jewish subconscious on a variety of issues. He explains that this requires separating his worldview from his militant tactics, which were really just a product of his time. Once one does that, Magid argues that we can see how things Kahane was talking about in the 1970s have continued to plague American Jews today. Magid also hopes to put Kahane's worldview in comparative context with other radical movements of the time, specifically on race but also in regard to liberalism, nationalism, and Zionism. In today's political climate, Magid believes that his chapter on race would be the most important takeaway for his audience because he explains that, "It is there I try to interrogate the 'grammar of race' he [Kahane] used to make his point about the Jews and antisemitism. I use critical race theory, and more specifically Afropessimism, as a way to understand what was at stake for Kahane on race and how he used that to double back to antisemitism and Jewish identity."

The Belin lecture series was established in 1991 through a generous gift from the late David W. Belin of Des Moines and New York to provide an academic forum for the discussion of contemporary Jewish life in the United States. Previous scholars to hold this honor include Deborah Lipstadt, Samuel Freedman, Ruth Messinger, Jim Loeffler, Beth Wenger, and Lila Corwin Berman, among others. Each year, the lecture is also published in written form in collaboration with Michigan Publishing. ■

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Climate justice and the Jewish community

By Miriam Chesterman, Emily Gordon, and Moss Herberholz, special to the WJN

As the conversation about climate change and climate justice expands, so too does the Jewish community's response. Second year students in the University of Michigan School of Social Work's Jewish Communal Leadership Program (JCLP) are presenting these complex issues to the community in their annual Communal Conversation this spring. On Sunday, March 27th, from 1 to 3:30 p.m. via Zoom, "Climate Justice and the Jewish Community: A Call to Action Through Dialogue" will examine the current movement by the Jewish community towards a more environmentally just future.

JCLP students are excited to bring together a panel of dynamic voices with extensive knowledge on how Jewish communities can respond to growing calls for climate justice across the country and around the world. Intended speakers include Rabbi Ellen Bernstein, a pioneer in the field of religion and ecology, as well as an eco-theologian, spiritual leader, writer, and creative; Rabbi Isaiah Rothstein, a Black Jewish Rabbinic Scholar and Public Affairs Advisor at Jewish Federations of North America (JFNA) and leader of the JEDI (Jewish Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) and racial justice initiatives; Kristy Drutman, a Jewish-Filipina environmental media creator and founder of Brown Girl Green, a media platform exploring the intersections between media, diversity, and environmentalism; Sophia Rich, an Ann Arbor high school junior who is passionate about connecting Jewish principles and climate justice and is a member of the National Leadership Board for the Jewish Youth Climate Movement; and Vicki Kaplan, Director of Organizing at Dayenu, as well as an activist and campaigner committed to movement-building and anti-racism work. A resource list with both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations engaging in this important work will be shared with all tuning in.

Addressing issues pertinent to and involving the Jewish community is a pillar of JCLP. Everyone in southeast Michigan and beyond is invited to join for what is sure to be a thought-provoking afternoon. JCLP is proud to host this event, generously supported by the following organizations and synagogues: Jewish Communal Leadership Program, The Jean & Samuel Frankel Center for Judaic Studies, University of Michigan Hillel, University of Michigan Trotter Multicultural Center, University of Michigan Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, University of Michigan School of Social Work Student Union, Temple Beth Emeth of Ann Arbor, Beth Israel Congregation of Ann Arbor, Repair the World, University of Michigan's American Culture Department, Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation, and The Amir Project. To RSVP for the event, visit https://ssw.umich.edu/r/jclpcc22. ■

In the Zone

By Sara Goldshlack

The scene in the Hebrew Day School first-grade classroom was a quiet commotion of movement and voices as students created a craft during their social emotional learning (SEL) class. There were sticky fingers and drippy glue, expressions of intense concentration, and the periodic squeak of sneakers as a student rushed over to see something a friend had made. The general sense of engagement and contentment shifted when a child came over to the teacher table, clearly upset.

"I got this glue, but it doesn't work!" she said, holding out her bottle of glue. On the table, within arm's reach of the student, were at least six unused bottles of glue, as well as other available craft materials.

"Hmmm," I said. "How are you going to solve that problem?"

The first grader's face showed puzzlement. "My glue doesn't work," she said again, more quietly. Though the majority of her expression was hidden behind her mask, I could see tears forming in her eyes.

"That sounds frustrating," I replied. "It's no fun to feel frustrated, but I know you can handle having that feeling while you think of a solution." I moved slightly toward the unused bottles of glue sitting on the table.

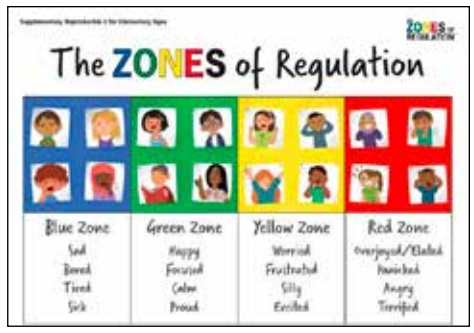
"I can't do the project without glue and this one doesn't work!" The student's voice was a crescendo of agitation. I took a deep breath, both to remind the student of 'belly breathing' as a calming tool, and also to steady my instinct to jump in and rescue by providing the solution.

After a moment, I saw the first grader take several deep breaths too.

"Maybe I could get a different glue," she ventured.

"Great idea!" I said. "I like how you picked a strategy to calm down and then you thought of an answer. Impressive problem solving!" She wiped her tears, grabbed a new glue, and skipped away to get on with her project.

Two years ago, it would have been atypical to find a first grader dissolving into tears at the first sign of frustration and needing teacher support to solve a simple problem. However, as a consequence of the pandemic, teachers are finding young students with gaps in their social and emotional skills. Skills like resilience, independent problem solving, distress tolerance, self-regulation, empathy, and managing social conflicts are lagging in many young students.



These COVID years have meant reaffirming the foundational principle of caregiving: protection. To keep our vulnerable children safe, especially before vaccinations were available, adults have kept children home with fewer opportunities for free play with similar-age peers, and under close parental supervision. All of these have been safe, necessary measures by adults making the best choices available to us in a terrifying situation. Now, parents, teachers, and pediatricians are recognizing the need to bolster the social-emotional skills of children, especially young children, who have been impacted by these lifestyle constraints.

As part of social emotional learning at Hebrew Day School, we adopted the Zones of Regulation curriculum. The curriculum was designed by occupational therapist Leah Kuypers to help students gain skills in the area of self-regulation. Self-regulation is defined as the best state of alertness — in both mind and body — for a specific situation. The program uses colorful 'Zones' as a child-friendly way to explain the different states of regulation a person might experience. The theory is that self-regulation can be an umbrella over most other social-emotional skills. For example, if a child is experiencing a heated conflict with a peer, a teacher's first move is always to help the child calm down before trying to mediate. A child who is frustrated, anxious, over-excited, or overwhelmed may have difficulty solving problems or participating in learning activities until they are able to recenter.

Zones of Regulation lessons and activities are designed to help students acknowledge and regulate their emotions. The goal is for students to recognize when they are in each of the different zones and learn to use strategies to change or stay in zones. In addition to gaining self-regulation skills, students practice reading other people's moods, exploring how others might react to their behavior, identifying things that trigger them to experience certain feelings, and practicing solving problems. Children hear the important message that no zone is 'bad' or 'naughty,' but sometimes a person is in a zone that doesn't match the expectations of a given situation, so they may need to use strategies to change zones. It is normal and expected that everyone will find themselves in each of the different zones at one time or another.

It is extremely fulfilling to watch children practicing the important skills of social emotional learning. Our students are catching on quickly, dipping their toes into independent problem solving, experimenting with different social roles, and becoming more adept at naming their many emotions. The resilience of children and their ability to adapt is a remarkable, energizing, universal phenomenon. At least three times this school year, I've noticed kids talking together and fleetingly wondered if they were communicating using American Sign Language because of their frequent gesturing. Each time, I found that they were simply talking. My hunch: kids are using more gestures to accentuate their speech to compensate for their expressions being hidden by masks. Impressive problem solving. ■

Lior Project hosts youth mental health first aid training

Jacob Singer, special to the WJN

On March 6, the Lior Project — a community initiative coordinated by Jewish Family Services (JFS) of Washtenaw County — is hosting a Youth Mental Health First Aid training for Jewish communal professionals. Hebrew Day School, staff and directors of religious schools at Washtenaw congregations, those who facilitate local camps and afterschool programs, and others who provide direct services to youth have been invited to receive this training at no cost to them or their organization.

Youth Mental Health First Aid teaches individuals how to identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. This training, presented by JFS's partner, Jewish Family Service of Metro Detroit, teaches adults who live and work with youth the skills they need to reach out and provide initial support to children and adolescents who may be developing a mental health or substance use problem and help connect them to the appropriate care. The course teaches participants the risk factors and warning signs of a variety of mental health challenges common among youth, including anxiety, depression, psychosis, eating disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), disruptive behavior disorders, and substance use disorder. Participants do not learn to diagnose, nor how to provide any therapy or counseling; rather, participants learn to support a youth who is developing signs and symptoms of a mental illness — or in an emotional crisis — by applying a core five-step action plan: assess for risk of suicide or harm, listen nonjudgmentally, give reassurance and information, encourage appropriate professional help, and encourage self-help and other support strategies.

In October 2021, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, and the Children's Hospital Association declared a national emergency regarding youth mental health. It is critical that professionals working with Jewish community youth receive resources and education to identify and assist those dealing with a mental health challenge.

The Youth Mental Health First Aid training to be held on March 6 is being planned by JFS of Washtenaw County, the organization that convenes and coordinates the Lior Project. The mission of the Lior Project is to increase awareness of, dialogue about, and support for issues of mental health, addiction, and suicide in the Washtenaw County Jewish community. The Lior Project exists to help reduce stigma, promote inclusivity, and enhance community support. Coordinated by JFS, with participation from many local Jewish organizations, the Lior Project is generously supported by the Jewish Women's Foundation of Metropolitan Detroit and the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor. For more information on the Lior Project, please visit www.jfsannarbor.org/lior.

RESOURCES

If you are in need of mental health support, please call (734) 436-4249 during regular business hours to make an appointment with JFS. For immediate assistance 24 hours a day, please contact the National Suicide Prevention Help Line at 800-273-TALK (8255). ■

Beth Israel March events

Rosenberg Scholar-in-Residence: Deborah Sacks Mintz

March 3–5

A transformative prayer leader and musician, Deborah Sacks Mintz has served innovative institutions around the country as a teacher of Torah and communal Jewish music. As the Community Singing Consultant of Hadar's Rising Song Institute, Deborah combines musical scholarship and practice to cultivate the grassroots musical and spiritual creativity of the Jewish people. Please visit our website for registration and more information. The Rosenberg Lecture Series is endowed through a generous contribution by Vic (z "l) & Val Rosenberg in memory of Cantor Alfred & Alice Rosenberg.

Leading from the Center: A Davening Workshop
Thursday, March 3, 7 p.m.

Deborah Sacks Mintz will guide learners in an exploration of technical skills, as well as strategies for effectively building and sustaining community through davening. This masterclass for daveners and Shelichi Tzibbur of all levels, both experienced and novice! Please note this is an in-person session only.

Hors d'oeuvres reception followed by "Boi Kallah, Shabbat Hamaalka: Singing in the Divine."

Friday, March 4, 5:30 p.m.

Through an exploration of singing as a spiritual practice, we'll learn new melodies, reconnect with familiar sounds, and ready ourselves for Shabbat.

Singing through the Sea, Lamenting at the River: Song Narratives in Tanakh

Saturday, March 5, 1 p.m.

How has music expressed both power and joy, suffering and loss, through the narrative of the Jewish people? Where do we see our experiences embedded within these sources? In this text-based class, we'll explore key Biblical narratives centering the outpouring of song, building out our own continued stories of powerful prayer from within.

Havdalah Concert and Melave Malka
Saturday, March 5, 7:30 p.m.

Bid farewell to Shabbat in song and keep the ruach going with an evening of spiritual music.

Purim
Wednesday, March 16
Plans are forthcoming. Please visit our website for more information.

From Panera to Electric Cars: Monthly Topics in Jewish Law
Saturday, March 19, 12:15 p.m.

May one bicycle on Shabbat? Is eating a grilled cheese at Panera kosher? Can one make minyan through Zoom? Is an LBGTQ ketubah halakhically permitted? Rav Nadav tackles contemporary topics in Jewish law, often sharing the best of Conservative Movement Responsa. Hybrid format (i.e. both in person and streaming). Zoom links are available on the Beth Israel website (www.bethisrael-aa.org).

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin
Mondays at 4 p.m.

All are invited to join our Talmud study class. We read the text in Hebrew but an English translation is available and all discussions will be in English so no familiarity with Hebrew is required. We will begin a new section of text, so this is a great time to join if you haven't studied with us previously. We will first study a selection from the beginning of the Talmudic tractate of Sukkah dealing with an interesting question concerning the building of a Sukkah. Then we will turn to a section from the tractate of Pesachim, concerning the Pesach Seder. Join us for some interesting text study and lively discussions to warm cold winter afternoons!

Theology Book Club – Online
Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

Beth Israel Congregation's Theology Book Club welcomes you to join them to read together and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. The books are in English. Contact Paul Shifrin at (248) 514-7276 for more information.

In Person and Online Services

Everyone is welcome to join Beth Israel for services, classes and events. Services are being held in person and virtually. Below is a list of the links to participate virtually in services at Beth Israel. Beth Israel is now live streaming services on the Beth Israel YouTube channel (Beth Israel Congregation AA MI). All links will also be available on the Beth Israel homepage (www.bethisrael-aa.org). Please note that passwords are used. Contact the office to get the passwords at office@bethisrael-aa.org.

Evening Minyan – virtual only
Sunday at 5 p.m.
Monday–Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Friday Evening Services – virtual only
Kabbalat Shabbat Service at 6 p.m.

Shabbat Morning Services – In person and virtual
Saturday at 9:30 a.m. ■

Jewish Federation opens nominations for board and other positions

By Eileen Freed

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor invites community members to express their interest in volunteer leadership positions for 2022–2023. Along with its professional team, Federation volunteers address the most significant issues facing the Jewish community. The Governance Committee of the Federation's Board seeks to engage people from across the community as committee volunteers, chairs, and board members.

"The ideal Federation volunteers are those that reflect the breadth, depth, and diversity of our Jewish Washtenaw County community including divergent viewpoints, affiliations, non-affiliations, and the like," says Decky Alexander, incoming Federation Board President and Governance Committee Chair. We welcome people with skills in communications, fundraising, community-building, allocations, and event planning, and those who seek to further develop experience in these areas. Board members in particular gain a strong perspective on the overall needs of the community and work creatively — both internally and with counterparts in other organizations — to address them.

The Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor provides and inspires philanthropic leadership and community-building to nurture a strong, engaged, connected, caring, vibrant, and enduring Jewish community locally, in Israel, and around the world. Federation relies on the generous time of community volunteers to achieve its goals.

"I have gained so much from my involvement with Federation, and I wish to share that experience with as many others who may have interest in our community and are seeking ways to productively channel it," says current Federation President Randy Milgrom. "We have a diverse and engaged and vibrant board, and I hope not only to strengthen it, but to continue to provide a pipeline for new and young leaders well into an even more secure future for our community."

The Jewish Federation's most well-known function is the Annual Community Campaign, which raises crucial, unrestricted funds that our partner organizations need to operate, leaving them free to more fully focus on their missions serving the community. Fundraising beyond the Annual Community Campaign enables organizations to tackle specific challenges, such as improving building security, maintaining staffing during COVID, and addressing social service needs.

In addition to fundraising to meet current needs, the planned giving arm of the Federation, the Jewish Community Foundation, provides donors the opportunity to endow organizations and programs they love. Through LIFE & LEGACY®, the Foundation is also helping to build a culture of legacy giving across the community.

Federation works to engage the community with programs such as Jewish Young Professionals, Women's Philanthropy, and Israel programming. Other engagement initiatives include Partnership2Gether, which connects local community members to Israelis in Moshav Nahalal, and the Jewish Community Relations Committee, which provides a platform for interaction with other faith, ethnic, and civic communities in Washtenaw County, and provides an opportunity to be present and to represent the Jewish community in broader communal issues.

From its unique position, the Jewish Federation convenes the community around issues of importance to nurture a strong communal infrastructure. This includes addressing communal security needs, fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment for people of all abilities and backgrounds, and coordinating community planning, including an upcoming community study.

Serving as a Federation volunteer means giving a few hours of your time on a regular basis to strengthen and enrich Jewish life locally and around the world. It is an opportunity to learn and grow as a leader and to have one's voice heard in shaping community for the next generation.

Individuals interested in serving on a committee or on the Federation Board of Directors should contact Eileen Freed at 734-773-3537 or eileenfreed@jewishannarbor.org. For more information about Federation, visit www.jewishannarbor.org. ■

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Their wedding guests helped craft their huppah and ketubah – a creative COVID union they'll never forget

Alix Wall, originally for the JTA

Julie Plaut Warwick and Ben Schreiber faced the same dilemma as many other couples planning a wedding during the pandemic: How to create a feeling of togetherness when guests may not feel safe attending?

"We wanted to be surrounded by our family and friends and have their blessings, as we had no idea who would actually come," said Plaut Warwick, of Issaquah, Washington.

The "Jewish creatives" they tasked to help them had ideas. And collaboratively, they figured out a way for the couple to be surrounded by the blessings of those important to them, whether they were there physically or not.

Ben and Julie Schreiber were married Oct. 10, 2021, in Kirkland, Wash., under a huppah whose design incorporated blessings from their friends and wedding guests. (Jenny GG Photography)

Invited guests were instructed to write down their blessings for the couple. A wedding co-officiant then collected the blessings and hung them from the poles of the huppah, the traditional Jewish wedding canopy, while the themes from those blessings were then inscribed on the border of the couple's ketubah, or marriage contract. They were also chanted by all the guests during their ceremony.

The couple had some idea of what was in store for them — but they didn't know everything.

"The news about the ketubah and a song coordinated with our huppah blessings trickled down to us slowly," said Schreiber. "By the time we saw and heard the song, we knew it was happening, but it was like a step-by-step leak."

Plaut Warwick, 56, is a laughter yoga instructor, mental health professional and Jewish educator. Divorced since 2006 and the mother of two adult children, she thought she would never again marry.

Schreiber, 52, is a senior software engineer at the biotech company Adaptive Biotechnologies, as well as a widower; his wife died of cancer in 2019.

They first met through the Reform Congregation Kol Ami in Kirkland, Washington, where Plaut Warwick was a longtime member and Schreiber was a newcomer. It was only months after they friended each other on Facebook that she commented on something he shared. They began online chatting the day after Thanksgiving, 2020.

Their chats continued over several days. Schreiber suggested a visit (he was living at his beach house three hours away from her during the pandemic). But Plaut Warwick was about to visit her elderly parents for a month in Florida, and didn't want to take any chances. Yet she soon changed her mind.

"The second he walked in and we embraced, I knew I was going to marry him," she said.

Schreiber felt similarly, adding that his late wife had given him her blessing to find love again. "I fully acknowledged that I'm in a broken state, but I knew I needed companionship, and the pandemic left me with a vacuum of not being with anybody that was good to help me recenter," he said.

He didn't leave until he drove her to the airport a few days later.

After quarantining for two weeks in Florida, Plaut Warwick stayed with her parents. Noticing she was always on the phone, her father began asking how late she was up the night before.

"I felt like I was 17 again," she said.

Judaism and Jewish ritual both play a large role in their lives. The first time the two showed up to Zoom services together was like a coming-out party, they said. Now, they sometimes lead services together.

As for their collaborative wedding, it started with Plaut Warwick's decision to commission Rhode Island-based artist Nancy Katz, principal artist of Nancy Katz/Wilmark Studios — which specializes in stained glass windows for synagogues — to make the couple's huppah.

Plaut Warwick knew Katz, co-officiant Marge Eiseman and ketubah artist Jennifer Judelsohn from connections in the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education (CAJE and its successor organization NewCAJE). Their connections allowed them to collaborate on the wedding in unexpected ways.

Plaut Warwick had a tallit made by Katz, who is mostly known for her painting on silk. But Katz had to give that up in recent years due to arthritis in her thumb. She found she can still paint on canvas, and used a lightweight one so it would drape properly.

Her design is bold and bright.

"The huppah was about celebration and joy and connection, but it also acknowledges this crazy time we're living in," said Katz. "They talked about their love of water and the sea, so the design has that fluid feel to it; the design just sort of came."

For the guests, Katz sent out kits she had assembled herself for writing down and decorating their blessings. She led a Zoom workshop for those who wanted guidance in decorating them.

The couple joined the Zoom session to greet everyone, and then left. Then, inspiration struck Judelsohn: "While we were creating the blessings with Nancy, I saw the blessings around the ketubah," she said. "In my original design, it was going to be a floral or leaf pattern." Instead, Judelsohn decided to incorporate themes from the huppah blessings into the design of the ketubah.

"I started by pulling out the words that were used the most," said Judelsohn, which is how words like "joy" and "laughter" ended up along the ketubah's borders.

Meanwhile, since Eiseman, who is a songleader and Jewish educator, was to co-officiate the wedding with Kol Ami's Rabbi Yohanna Kinberg, she began thinking what her unique contribution could be.

The end result, in which Kinberg and the wedding guests sang their blessings collectively, was "less a song than a 'sound bath' using the words everyone had offered," she said. "This was not just me singing to them, but we engaged everyone in the singing."

The wedding took place October 10 at the Woodmark Hotel in Kirkland, Washington, in front of approximately 100 guests, all of whom had been tested for COVID-19.

"A lot of it was meant to be tongue and cheek because COVID has just robbed people of their joy," said Plaut Warwick, explaining why the wedding party consisted of two 50-something women, dubbed "flowerchicks," who threw petals from felt jack-o-lanterns and groomsmen called "Ring Security Dudes" who carried lockboxes for the rings.

As for the huppah and ketubah? They are now both displayed next to each other in their home.

"They just make me smile every time I walk by them," said Plaut Warwick, who has since taken the name Schreiber. "They are both so colorful and meaningful. When we buy a house, we need one with large walls." ■

International Women's Day

"The Difference You Make: A Conversation with a Holocaust Survivor"

Tuesday, March 8, 2022
3:00 pm EST

Join us for an empowering virtual interview with Dr. Irene Butter, Author of "Shores Beyond Shores: From Holocaust to Hope, My True Story"
The book is available where all fine books are sold.

Contact: wliemiginfo@gmail.com

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Moving Traditions at TBE

Special to the WJN

Throughout this school year, Temple Beth Emeth has expanded how they prepare their families for the Bar and Bat Mitzvah journey, or, as Moving Traditions calls it, the "B-Mitzvah" journey. Moving Traditions is a Jewish educational organization seeking to transform Jewish teen education and engagement. From their website, www.movingtraditions.org, "Moving Traditions connects the issues preteens and teens care about most — such as body image, social and academic pressure, friendship, romance, and sexuality — to enduring Jewish values, fosters positive peer-to-peer relationships through our trained educators and mentors, and inspires participants to develop an ongoing connection to Jewish community. By promoting a more inclusive and expansive view of gender for Jewish girls, boys, and transgender and nonbinary teens, we create a more vibrant, engaging Judaism that helps all teens to flourish."

At Temple Beth Emeth, this connection takes form through a series of curated programs for its sixth and seventh graders and their families. "All the Moving Traditions programs, both those for families and those just for the students, broaden the conversation of what it means to become Bat or Bar Mitzvah," said Rabbi Daniel Alter, TBE's Director of Education. "Each session focuses on a different aspect, be it growing up, parent-child relationships, gender identity, dealing with antisemitism, and more."

The Moving Traditions B-Mitzvah curriculum incorporates two different formats. One piece focuses solely on sixth and seventh grade students and is designed to take place during regular Religious School sessions throughout the year. The other component brings students and their parents together, where they engage in both combined (students and parents together) and parallel (in which students and parents engage in similar topics separately) learning. At TBE this year, these family focused sessions occur on Saturday afternoons and conclude with havdalah.

"Gathering our sixth and seventh grade families over the course of this year has added a depth of community we only could have with in-person gathering," said Rabbi Josh, TBE's Senior Rabbi. "We've learned together, we've shared our excitement and our worries. We've become proximate even in the face of this pandemic. Our Moving Traditions gatherings have helped build a sense of cohesiveness even in trying times."

Each session plays out a little differently. One session with sixth graders and their families began with a "human barometer." One side of the room was designated "agree; the other, "disagree." After hearing a prompt, such as "This is the first b-mitzvah in our family," participants move themselves on the scale to share their response. Another activity actualized a conversation of juggling teen and adult responsibilities by literally labeling balloons with responsibilities and challenging students to keep them all afloat as long as possible! Every session provides great opportunities for parents and students to learn with each other, from each other, and to share their thoughts with one another.

Integrating Moving Traditions into their youth education program represents TBE's latest expansion of their Bat and Bar Mitzvah experience. "Becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah is far more than simply leading a service or reading Torah," explained Rabbi Alter. "The ritual is of course important, but we also recognize a Bat and Bar Mitzvah celebration as a singular moment in our students' evolution from childhood to adulthood. As our students grow into the awkward and amazing years between ages 12 and 20, their families and their communities grow as well. We want to support, encourage, and do our best to prepare our families for and during these changes. Moving Traditions offers a structure to do that."

TBE's Cantor Regina Hayut expanded on this idea. "We recognize that becoming Bar or Bat Mitzvah is a deeply emotional time in a family's life cycle. It is exciting but it is also daunting," she explained. "Moving Traditions has offered a great opportunity to open conversations with our students and their parents about so many challenging issues that emerge at this juncture in life. Moving into adolescence and growing up is difficult and can feel lonely for both children as well as parents. Coming together as a community to grapple with these issues has been a powerful opportunity for our TBE families. I wish there was a program like this when my children were preparing for their B'nai Mitzvah experiences!"

To learn more about TBE's Terry A. Ginsburg Religious & Hebrew School, which includes Moving Tradition's B-Mitzvah program, please contact Rabbi Daniel K. Alter at rabbialter@templebethemeth.org ■

Moving Traditions
Connect. Challenge. Change.

TBE events in March

Events and services are both in-person and/or virtual. Please see www.templebethemeth.org for full details, locations information, and links.

Families with Young Children Tot Shabbat
First Fridays of each month at 5:45 p.m.

Shabbat Service
Fridays at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday Shabbat service
Saturdays at 10 a.m.

Weekday morning blessings
Daily at 9:15 a.m.
Join Rabbi Whinston each morning for a short service of song, poetry, and meditation.

Daily afternoon blessings
Mondays through Thursdays at 3 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut each afternoon for an intimate short service.

Adult B'nai-mitzvah classes
Mondays at 6 p.m.
To join the class, or for more information, contact Cantor Hayut.

Women's Torah study
Mondays at 7:30 p.m.
Join Cantor Hayut in an in-depth study and lively discussion of the week's Torah portion. This year, the group will focus on exploring passages that have informed rituals of modern Jewish life.

Twenty-five-minute mindfulness with Jewish spiritual director Linda Greene
Tuesdays at 8:30 a.m.
Zoom room opens at 8:15 a.m. for optional check-in. Blessing and intention setting 8:30–8:35 a.m. Meditate 8:35–9 a.m. Start your day centered and connected.

Talmud Tuesdays with Rabbi Alter
Tuesdays at 11 a.m. or 8 p.m.
Both meetings discuss the same material. Join Rabbi Alter to discover the Talmud, the formative collection of stories and discussions that defined the post-Temple Judaism that continues today! Together, explore the foundations of our contemporary Jewish ethics, beliefs, and practices, as well as some tremendous tales about our ancient rabbis! Join anytime! All materials are provided.* (*It is recommended that you read *If All the Seas Were Ink* by Ilana Kurshan, but it's not required or expected.)

Weekly Mahj
Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m.
Wednesdays at 1 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner
Thursdays at 5 p.m. (in March), and Wednesday, March 30
Join Claire Weiner for a 40-minute meditation session

Jewish Prayer: Finding Our Way into the History, Meaning, and Spirituality of our Worship Service
Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. or 7:30 p.m.
Both meetings discuss the same material. Join Rabbi Whinston for an ongoing exploration of the individual prayers that constitute the majority of our worship, from Shabbat to High Holy Days.

Biblical Book Club with Cantor Hayut
Thursdays at 11 a.m.
Join Cantor Hayut to read and discuss books of Jewish interest a few chapters at a time. This year, the book group will be reading primarily, although not exclusively, works by Israeli authors. For more information or questions, please contact Cantor Hayut.

Back Door Food Pantry
Thursdays, 4 to 7 p.m.

Shabbat morning Torah study
Saturdays at 8:50 a.m.
Join us for this weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston.

Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle - Adar II
Wednesday, March 3 at 6:30 p.m.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose
Tuesday, March 1 at 7:30 p.m. or Thursday, March 3 at noon
Both meetings discuss the same material. Join Cantor Emerita Annie Rose in an exploration of spirituality through discussions of four fascinating books throughout the year. Contact Annie Rose at cantorannie@gmail.com to join and for more details.

Purim

Joint Purim Celebration — TBE and BIC
Sunday, March 13 at 2:30 p.m.

Megillah Family and Fun Reading
Wednesday, March 16 at 6:30 p.m.

Full Megillah Reading
Wednesday, March 16 at 8 p.m. ■

WTBE'S HAMANTASHEN
FUNDRAISING SALE
Featuring Cream Cheese/ Poppyseed/
Prune with Walnut/ Apricot/ Raspberry
From Zingerman's Bakehouse

PURIM IS COMING!!
Pre-order Now through March 6, 2022
www.templebethemeth.org
Pickup at the WTBE gift shop
March 13, 2:30 p.m.~4 p.m. & March 16, 5:30 p.m.~6:30 p.m.
$7 for a bag of 5

Amalek: From before Sinai until today

Rabbi Aharon Goldstein, special to the WJN

Purim this year begins on Thursday evening, March 17. The megillah will be read the evening of March 17 and Friday morning March 18. It's customary on the Shabbat before Purim to read a special portion of the Torah that deals with the nation of Amalek and the war that the Jewish people had to fight with them. The reason why we read about Amalek is because Haman was a descendant of Amalek and we can see similar traits that Haman had — that he wanted to wipe out all of the Jews — just as his predecessor Amalek wanted to do. That's why we read about Amalek on the Shabbat before Purim.

So, to elaborate on this particular story, four times in Jewish history the Jewish people had to face the "Amaleks" and wage war against them. The first time was when they left Egypt. Before they went to receive the Torah they had to face the Amalekim. The Jews encountered them and, as the verse says, Joshua managed to weaken the Amalekim so that they would not be a threat to the Jews. As a side note, the Amalekim were the first nation to have the audacity to take any action against the Jews after seeing what happened with the mighty nation of Egypt and how that empire was destroyed. So, it showed a lot of chutzpah for this little nation of Amalek to dare to wage a war against the Jews. That's what the Midrash says.

The second time was before the Jews entered into the land of Israel. Amalek came disguised as Canaanites so that the Jewish people wouldn't know that it was really Amalek. They waged a war against the Jews and, thanks to the Almighty, the Jewish people won the war.

The third time the Jews faced the Amalekim was when they were entering into the land of Israel and settling down. They were appointing Shaul to be the first king and he was told by G-d to wipe out the Amalekim in their entirety.

The fourth time is afterwards, and this is until the coming of Moshiach we're busy getting rid of Amalek.

So, in these four stories we can find a parallel between the two of them. The Jewish people, when they became a nation, went through two stages. The first stage was spending forty years in the desert. There in the desert what kind of life did they lead? It was a very holy life. Because they were not involved in the physical world they didn't have to plant, sow, wash their clothes, etc. They lived with miracles. Six hundred thousand men and more than double that with women and children lived in the barren desert. There was nothing there. They didn't have to get involved, in a direct way, with the physical world. All of their needs came directly from G-d. That's the first stage. The second stage was when they entered into the land of Israel. There they had to get involved with the physical world. They had to plant, sow and take care of all of their physical needs — and that's from then until today. With the coming of the Moshiach, we'll have a complete world and we won't have the limitations that we have today.

These two stages that the Jewish people went through and the four times they had to encounter Amalek were, as we mentioned earlier; first, when they left Egypt and just entered into the desert; second, when they were just leaving the desert and entering the land of Israel; third, just after entering the land of Israel and getting settled; and fourth, finishing up the job even to this day until the coming of the Moshiach. So that's how we see the parallel between these encounters that Amalek had with the Jewish people.

Another observation we can make is the difference between the first and third stages. When, in the first stage, in the desert, Amalek encountered the Jews in a revealed, undisguised manner: his identity was clear. Similarly, in the third stage, when they were settling into the land of Israel — that also was having Amalek undisguised and revealed. However, in the second stage when the Jews were leaving the desert, the Amalekim came with their identity disguised as Canaanites. That's similar to our current times which is a second stage of leaving exile and entering redemption by greeting Moshiach that we are going to be faced with Amalek in a disguised form. He's going to pretend that he is something different from what he actually is in order to entrap the Jewish people.

According to the Chassidic interpretation, this Amalek that we are talking about is manifested not only as a physical person, but as a "miniature Amalek" within everyone's own psyches that attempts to distance us from G-d. For example, the Torah uses language that implies that Amalek caused the Jewish people to "cool down" their enthusiasm for G-d and Torah and mitzvos. Similarly, today, we have our own "little Amalek" that tries to cool us down from our commitment to G-d and our attempts to try to get closer to G-d. We must be aware of this disguised Amalek who is trying to distance us from G-d.

The Amalek tries to use all different logical arguments to distance a person from G-d. Like we said previously, he disguised himself as a Canaanite. The word Canaanite also has a meaning of a "businessperson." He tries to be dishonest when doing his "business" and he claims that any success that he has comes from his own strength and not from G-d.

So therefore, once a year, we read in the Torah about the Amalek in order to recognize our own "little Amalek" that we have — in order not to fall prey to it. On the contrary, to strengthen ourselves in our service to G-d — and for sure G-d will give us the ability — just like the Jewish people weakened Amalek in the desert — that we should also weaken our "little Amalek" and do what G-d wants us to do. ■

A unique Yiddish megile

By Shifra Epstein

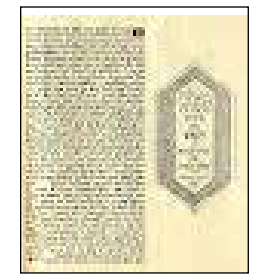
Between World Wars I and II, printing of the biblical Book of Esther — called Megillat Esther in Hebrew and Megiles Ester in Yiddish — flourished in the United States. These publications ranged from simple paper booklets to illuminated and illustrated scrolls

The scroll pictured above, completed in 1936, uses the Yiddish translation of the Book of Esther done by the well-known Yiddish poet and Bible translator Yehoash (Solomon Blumgarten).

The fine calligraphy is by his daughter Evelyn (Chava) Yehoash Blumgarten. Evelyn (Chava) calligraphed the entire megile in Hebrew script, combining modern and faux-archaic fonts to create a style reminiscent of ancient Hebrew script.

The Yehoash megile is completely unique in the history of megillot published in the United States; it is the only known megile scroll printed in Yiddish. The Yiddish megile follows the traditional design of a Hebrew illuminated scroll. Each of the book's ten chapters begins with an enlarged letter set within an embellished rectangular frame.

Each page is composed of two columns, with forty-two lines per column, according to the traditional scribal layout required for the writing of a Torah scroll. The scroll was also reproduced in printed book form in 1936.



I bought a copy of the megile scroll printed above in early 1978 from Zosa Szajkowski, YIVO's archivist at the time, while conducting research for an exhibition at the YIVO archives: "Purim: The Face and the Mask." In 1979 the exhibit, including the Yehoash megile, went up. Images of the scroll were also reproduced in the exhibition catalogue. After the exhibit was dismantled, I donated the megile to the Yeshiva University Museum, where it is currently part of the museum collection. The megile can also be found in the collection of the Jewish Theological Library and at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem. ■

Muriel Rukeyser's Houdini, continued from page 1

The inaugural Houdini performance at 2 p.m. on Sunday, March 20, at EMU's Sponberg Theatre will be preceded at 11 a.m. by a forum that brings together three engaging experts: the poet and founder of Paris Press, Jan Freeman; the poet and Rukeyser scholar Stefania Heim; and University of Michigan Professor of Film, Television, and Media, Matthew Solomon. Those interested in gaining deeper understanding of Rukeyser's fascination with Houdini are invited to register for this forum. You can find the registration link at http://murielrukeyser.emuenglish.org/.

The second performance, at Riverside Arts Center on Thursday, March 24, at 7 p.m. is designed to appeal to a younger audience alive to the magic of poetry and the imagination, as well as to encourage their response. In collaboration with YpsiWrites, a writing-focused nonprofit organization serving the Ypsilanti area, we invite local youth to submit poems for a Poetry Wall displayed at Riverside Arts Center prior to the performance. The poetry submission form as well as teacher and student guides to Rukeyser and Houdini are available on the YpsiWrites website (https://www.ypsiwrites.com/) and on the Muriel Rukeyser Living Archive (murielrukeyser.emuenglish.org).

The final two performances, on March 26 and 27, will take place at Detroit's Matrix Theatre, a community theater dedicated to the creation and production of original plays and education in play writing, performance, and puppetry for people of all ages.

Under the direction of EMU Theatre Professor Lee Stille, the talented actors of EMU's Theatre Program will bring the musical to life in each of four staged readings. Using scripts, and relying on language, movement, and the audience's imagination, the performers will conjure up Rukeyser's magical telling of Houdini's story.

We thank Michigan Humanities (an affiliate of the National Endowment of the Humanities), EMU's Center for Jewish Studies, and the EMU English Department for their generous support of these events. For more information, please contact EMU Professor of English Elisabeth Däumer at edaumer@emich.edu. ■

Idelle Hammond-Sass wins Shmita art prize, continued from page 1

to create an object with a ritual completely in place. "The way I feel about objects, they come to life when you use them. They can be interesting or aesthetically pleasing, but the layer of use, the intention, expands what it is from wood or metal to be something that's shared. Ritual objects have that other dimension to them, they become animate. They can offer you that by being there, but you have to interact with them."

As the meaning of shmita and its observance changes in contemporary times, we may find ourselves wanting to bring back the more traditional elements. In lieu of leaving a field fallow, Idelle suggested supporting a nonprofit organization such as Food Gatherers. "Shmita is something that requires learning and exploration … I hope that we would grow into observing shmita, both on a personal and a community level."

Idelle's jewelry is being shown at the WSG Gallery, and she will be an invited artist at the gallery this year. Her winning piece can be found on the Shmita Project website at https://shmitaproject.org/submissions/renewing-shmita/. ■

Lucia Ruedenberg living on the Community Farm

Hannah Davis, special to the WJN

Our call was charmingly punctuated with a cuckoo-clock alarm, the chirps and squawks of pet birds, and periodic interruptions from kids in the house, as I sat down to talk to community member Lucia Ruedenberg about her life in Ann Arbor, her involvement with one of the oldest CSAs in the country (that also has deep connections to the Jewish community in the area), and the ways her Judaism informs and ties into her life philosophy.

Lucia moved to the Ann Arbor area in 2018 from Pittsburgh, having prior to that been a New York City resident for 30 years. She grew up in Ames, Iowa. Her Pittsburgh Jewish community, Dor Hadash, was one

of the congregations hit in Squirrel Hill in the Tree of Life shooting. When she and her family came to Ann Arbor, they looked up Reconstructionist congregations in the area and attended infrequently. Lucia decided to officially join the Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC) this past year.

During their move, Lucia and her husband reached out through a connection via the contra dance community, which they were active in back in Pittsburgh and wanted to be involved in here too. They connected with Nancy and Drake Meadow, who are also AARC members. They saw the listing for a house on a farm in the area, which turned out to be the teaching farm for the Rudolf Steiner school in Ann Arbor. Lucia said she and her husband had "had a homestead in a previous life and wanted to be back in connection with some kind of farming." The farm in question, Community Farm of Ann Arbor, is one of the first CSAs in the country and the first in Michigan, founded in 1988 with biodynamic principles (biodynamics is the philosophy that helped spawn the modern organic movement). Lucia and her family live on the property in the house, and the farmer lives nearby.

Community Farm has a strong focus on the "community" aspect: if you want, you can pay your dues and pick up your vegetables and leave, but many members go further. There are "weed and sing" events as well as opportunities for families to bring children who can explore the farm, play, and learn where their food comes from. Members are encouraged to bring their own skills: one member with expertise in solar energy has

converted many of the farm's buildings and one of the tractors to run on solar, and another member runs the beehives. Last year the farm put on a fundraiser event to raise money for new roofs for the barns, with live music, contra dancing, and outdoor lectures on the history of barns, sustainable farming, and ecology.

Helping run one of the longest-running CSAs in the country isn't easy, Lucia says: "The economics of sustainable farming are very hard … it requires a group effort." Most small farms stay afloat because they are a multi-generational undertaking, the land is inherited, and often one or more household members work outside the farm. Community Farm is exploring ways to sustain their model long term. Their farmer, Dan Gannon, is focusing on methods of restorative agriculture and no-till principles to increase the nutrient density of the soil. A variety of animals are helping to fertilize the fields and clear out the brush, following a few lean years of harvests. They have also introduced a stewardship cost to the CSA membership, as a way for some members to contribute extra toward the ongoing cost of stewarding the land and the infrastructure, beyond just the cost of growing vegetables.

Community Farm has some surprisingly deep ties to the Jewish community in the area, with many active Jewish members, including Rebecca Kanner, who has been president of the farm board for many years, and Marcy Epstein, who has provided Lucia with support and community during the pandemic. Lucia says, "They've found it a place to bring their Jewish values of what it means to be connected to the land and to embody their spirituality. The farm has always welcomed people to do things like that, from all different parts of the community. That's part of its purpose." They have all found participation on the farm to be a form of tikkun olam for them. Lucia herself connects her Jewish values to her work on the farm, saying "We seek to be good custodians of the land as we grow CSA shares. We experience the natural world as an expression of God, as God's gift to us, and it is our responsibility to value it. At the Community Farm, we value the sacredness of ordinary, daily life, with its tasks and responsibilities, especially in how they impact food and community."

It's hard, when you're young, to imagine looking at the arc of your life and constructing a coherent narrative from it, pulling meaningful trends. Talking to Lucia shows that is a possibility, though. Some persistent themes were repeated no matter what part of her life we talked about. She discussed her mixed heritage influences growing up with her German Jewish scientist father and her Swiss Protestant puppeteer mother, straddling the worlds of Christianity and Judaism, academia and art, and learning to combine the two in her career, where she has been a writer and an academic, and now makes natural, Waldorf-inspired toys for Palumba, a local business owned by a long-term Community Farm member. "I sit at the crossroads of different cultures … I think that at their core art and science come from the same source, are different expressions of the same energy, just a different way of looking at and expressing and understanding the world." Living on the Community Farm, too, allows her to bring together different parts of herself: working with her hands, committing to biodynamic principles, being in touch with the sources of one's food, connecting to Jews in community, and raising a new generation with deep ties to the land.

She says she's been able to look back on her life and see the different stages she went through across the decades: "The 20s were an incredible time of experimenting and trying new things, the 30s were real hard work years … and by the time you hit 40 you can say, 'I think I know what I want' … you don't have to try everything anymore. By the time you hit 50, you really get a lot of clarity. It kind of all starts at 50." She compares her journey through life to that of Rebecca Solnit, whose book, *Recollections of My Nonexistence*, she's been reading. Solnit "always seemed to know she wanted to be a writer, but it took her forever to become one. She took a lot of winding paths."

Lucia looks forward to deepening her involvement with AARC in the new year, perhaps by hosting congregation events on the farm: putting up a sukkah, hosting Shabbat, or other celebrations. The pandemic, and the death of her husband in mid-2020, forced her and her two teenage daughters to reconfigure many elements of their life, and her "relationship to everything has changed profoundly in many ways." But, as with all of us, she's looking forward to things getting better. She talked about her time working on a kibbutz in Israel in her 30s, talking to survivors from WWII there: "They said the reason Jews have survived this long was because they were motivated, they were so committed and motivated to survive. That's what I feel, that kind of tenacity and motivation to survive, but also to thrive and to do good."

Learn more about the Community Farm at http://communityfarmofaa.org/, or at https://www.facebook.com/community-farmofannarbor. ■

Israel is Growing ... All the way to space!

By Ron Harel, Shinshinit (Israeli emissary) to the greater Ann Arbor and Metro Detroit Jewish communities through a teen gap year program from the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI). Ron and her cohort of four high school graduates arrived in Michigan in August 2021. The Shinshinim serve as cultural ambassadors to diaspora communities, offering a personal connection with Israel. The local Shinshinim program is a partnership between JAFI and the Jewish Federations of Greater Ann Arbor and of Metropolitan Detroit.

I'd like you to think about how big the universe is, and how small the world is in comparison.

Next, think about how big the world itself is, and how small Israel is compared to it.

Yet that tiny country in the Middle East, 450 times smaller than the United States, found itself on a list of countries that are leading the world's space industry; more specifically, Israel is now the seventh country ever to cross the boundaries of our planet into space.

Eitan Stiva

This March, Eitan Stiva, a former Israeli combat pilot in the Israel Defense Forces, will be the second Israeli to go to space. On January 13 of this year, eight space satellites built by Israeli middle school students were launched into space. From eighth graders in Israel straight to NASA's launch site in Florida.

It sounds amazing, and it is. But did you know that one of Israel's current missions in space originally started with … Genesis? Genesis is the name of the first Israeli spaceship that made it all the way to the moon.

Genesis' story begins more than eight years ago with three Israeli engineers and a crazy decision — "overly-ambitious" as engineer Kfir Damari said — to respond to a huge challenge: enter the Google Space Competition to launch the smallest spacecraft in history to the moon. Until Israel entered the competition, only the biggest countries in the world had dared to try. Many doubted Israel's attempt would be successful, but the Israelis knew that just because you don't have the necessary knowledge or the right resources from the start, ambition and chutzpah will get you where you want to go.

And so, those three engineers who decided to do something no one had done before — a truly Israeli act —founded SpaceIL, a company whose goal was to bring Israel to the moon. They worked on the project for over eight years until the exciting day when Genesis was launched into space, on February 21, 2019.

How did it go? Just under two months after it launched, on April 11, Genesis failed to land successfully, its main computer stopped working just a few meters before landing, and it crashed on the moon's surface. Although there was disappointment, there was also incredulity as the world looked up at the smallest spacecraft in the world, from one of the smallest countries in the world, almost touching the surface of the moon. It was an unforgettable image.

"Everyone saw what we did. It brought pride to Israelis, it brought pride to the Jews of the world, that their small country was able to do something like this," said Maurice Kahn, the philanthropist who funded the mission. Even in success and even in failure, Am Israel Chai! — the People of Israel live and continue to grow and develop.

My personal story of Israeli growth, the moments I've realized successes and failures are inevitable parts of trying new ideas and things, seeped into me in those very moments that Genesis crashed into the moon's surface. I happened to be attending a start-up conference at the time, as part of the MEET program, a three-year entrepreneurship, leadership, and technology institute for Israeli and Palestinian teens. On that April day in 2019, my teammates and I were in the midst of a hectic and exhausting 48 hours of sleepless development work on my BARK startup idea — an adoption platform for dogs in danger of being euthanized.

Although we were deep in work, Genesis was a big deal, and we couldn't stop watching as it crashed on the moon. It was heartbreaking! All that work … and so close …

The space industry symbolizes a lot for me in terms of growth; entrepreneurship has always been an integral part of my life, from selling cookies in front of my house to my first start-up. It is like that for every Israeli teenager, for every person, with a creative idea striving to bring it to life.

But even though it crashed, Genesis still actually landed on the moon. And it was in that moment that I understood what takes Israelis so far. We are not afraid to take risks, or even crash, because we've known a lot of failures over our short time. What carries us forward is that we can see always new growth, even from the failures, and move ahead towards the next challenge.

The spaceship Genesis reminded me that the story of Israeli and Jewish growth begins with

the Biblical Genesis. Our growth begins with our roots, the challenges we've endured throughout history and how we grew from them. These challenges made us realize that no matter how small we are in relation to the world, or compared to other countries, out there in space the rules are different. Time after time, Israel proves to the world that the sky is just not our limit.

Three years and one month after the first Israeli spacecraft almost landed on the moon, Eitan Stiva will be the second Israeli to go into space, with 35 Israeli scientific experiments on board. He will continue the journey started by Ilan Ramon, the first Israeli to go to space on the shuttle Columbia, whose entry back to earth, on February 1, 2003, tragically ended in flames as the world watched.

Still, Israel continues to send satellites into space as a world leader in space exploration, celebrating with the innovation-laden Israeli Space Week this past January. Meanwhile, SpaceIL is working on the Genesis 2 project … because who doesn't love a second season?

Onward with our growth, we will never give up. ■

Ann Arbor student experiences 'Muss Magic' in semester abroad program

JD Krebs, special to the WJN

When Greenhills Upper School made the move to online classes during the pandemic, Ryder Fried, now a 17-year-old senior there, immediately began looking for alternatives. "My family and I started looking for in-person learning opportunities," he said. What he found would send him across the world for a life-changing experience.

Ryder Fried, second from left.

Instead of attending online classes, Ryder spent a fall semester at Alexander Muss High School in Israel (Muss), Jewish National Fund-USA's (JNF-USA) flagship study abroad in Israel program. "It was one of the best three-month experiences of my life," he said.

With five Michigan students spending either a semester or a summer program in Israel at Muss within the last two years, the study abroad experience has recently gained a lot of traction within the Michigan Jewish community. With a unique educational experience that blends traditional high school classes with experiential learning that uses the land of Israel as a living and breathing classroom, Muss gives students an unforgettable experience they can take with them when they return home.

For Ryder, one memory in particular that stuck with him was the day he climbed the ancient Jewish fortress of Masada with his class. "Masada was a particularly special day," he said. "Before we went, we learned the history of Masada, which made the climb up all the more impactful."

"What Muss does with their studies is extremely impressive," said Sunny Nayberg, JNF-USA's Israel Programs Admissions Director, Midwest. "Students remain on track to finish high school on time thanks to Muss' focus on academic excellence, while also experiencing Israel's history for themselves and strengthening their bond with the Jewish homeland."

Ryder also fondly recalls all of the people he met at Muss. "I came to Israel not knowing anyone and left with 60 new friends," he said. "I think not knowing anyone else at the start was a blessing because it motivated me to hang out with new individuals that would soon become my best friends."

After Ryder finished his semester abroad, he returned home with a newfound motivation to be an active member of his Jewish community, noting that while his Judaism was always a major part of his identity, he was never particularly involved in the community.

"I have always considered Judaism to be a major factor in my life. My family celebrates all the holidays, including Shabbat each Friday night, and I attended Jewish Day School for years," he said. "However, I didn't (and still don't) attend temple very often, so I wouldn't say that I was that engaged with my local Jewish community."

However, after Ryder returned home, he reached out to the Ann Arbor Jewish Federation and started tutoring English for students in Israel. He also worked with several Israeli students from Moshav Nahalal, the Jewish Federation's Israel exchange student program. "I helped them with English, which was cool because I got to use my Hebrew that I learned at Muss!"

"We call it the 'Muss Magic,'" said Nayberg. "Students who come back from Muss are far more likely to be engaged in the Jewish community, growing up to be activists on their college campuses and leaders in their community."

When asked if he would recommend the program to other high school students, Ryder emphatically said he would. "I would encourage all high school students to spend a semester in Israel," he said. "My main piece of advice for students coming to Israel would be to step outside their comfort zone and try to get to know everyone. During my semester, all the students were so fun. There were some kids that I only really got to know towards the end of the program, but we were able to get close."

In the meantime, Ryder has been focused on college applications, and plans on involving himself in Jewish life once on campus. In addition, he looks forward to his next trip to Israel where he can revisit some of the iconic sights that he visited during his time at Muss.

Alexander Muss High School in Israel offers both semesters abroad in Israel and summer programs. For more information, go to amhsi.org or contact Sunny Nayberg at snayberg@jnf.org ■

People Love Dead Jews author stirs lively crowd at Federation's Main Event

by Federation Staff

With more than 100 people convening in person under strict COVID protocols — and nearly 300 more in attendance by Zoom — author Dara Horn and Marty Shichtman, Eastern Michigan University's Professor of English and Director of its Center for Jewish Studies, engaged in a compelling conversation at the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's Main Event held on the evening of February 9.

Horn is the award-winning author of six books, including her most recent — her first work of nonfiction, *People Love Dead Jews: Reports from a Haunted Present*. Horn has a doctorate in comparative literature from Harvard University and is a popular lecturer for audiences around the world. So, when this pair of scholars sat down in matching armchairs on a stage prepared for a heart-to-heart chat, the audience was immediately in thrall of these smart, engaged, and passionate people conversing in a friendly yet urgent way about some of the most pressing issues of the day.

Dara Horn (center) with 2022 Main Event Chairs Monica & Ben

The Main Event was held in the ballroom of Ann Arbor's Kensington Hotel, and the evening's program was co-chaired by Federation's immediate past president Steven Aronson and his wife Levana — along with community members Ben and Monica Rosen, whom Mr. Aronson referred to in his remarks as representative of our "next generation of leaders."

"This is pretty much my first large indoor gathering since Omicron hit," Federation President Randy Milgrom told the crowd during his opening remarks. "And I cannot tell you what a pleasure it has been to finally see — and to schmooze with — so many of you in person this evening. More than a hundred of you, which is quite a few more than we had initially expected! So perhaps tonight will mark the beginning of the end of the virtual, or hybrid, event. Let us hope ... "

Many in attendance (including several prominent public officials, such as Ann Arbor Mayor Christopher Taylor and Councilmember Jen Eyer, as well as U.S. Representative Debbie Dingell and State Representative Yousef Rabhi via Zoom) expressed similar sentiments — happy to be together to catch up with old friends, and appreciative of the opportunity to be in the room where it happens, after two years of experiencing much of life's programming behind a computer screen.

"Inspiring, thought provoking, and healing for me — and I sensed for many," said Federation Vice President Decky Alexander.

Alexander also contributed to the underlying tone of levity often needed to delve fully into the most serious of topics when she introduced the soon-to-be-retiring Professor Shichtman, a colleague of hers at EMU: "Though on some days he may feel as such, he is not a dead Jew. Actually, Marty is very much alive — quite present as a contributor and luminary, nationally and locally, to Jewish education and life, often dedicated to educating non-Jewish people about Jewish culture, faith, history, and our contributions to humanity."

Dara Horn in conversation with EMU's Marty Shichtman at the Main Event

Once introduced, Shichtman launched in with his first question. Since Horn's previous books are all novels, why had she decided to shift gears to write a nonfiction book — and one about dead Jews, no less?

Horn, an engaging speaker with an incredibly facile mind, explained, among other reasons, that in some ways this is a book she had "been trying all her life not to write." *People Love Dead Jews* — a title which the author says she still can't believe her publisher let her keep — first took shape in her mind's eye when she realized that while most people could name four concentration camps, almost no one could name four Yiddish writers.

"So why do you care so much about how they died," she thought, "if you don't seem to care at all about how they lived?" And the book became a way to figure that out for herself. What she discovered, she said, is that, "People tell stories about dead Jews that make them feel better about themselves. Usually they require the erasure of actual Jews in order to tell that story. We feel sad, but great about ourselves. We all look great compared with Nazis."

But now we're in this "strange situation" where six million dead Jews in the Holocaust is antisemitism, and "anything short of that is all in our heads."

As a prominent example of this "erasure," Horn noted that much of the popular Holocaust literature and remembrances focus on stories of "people like us," the assimilated. At the Holocaust Museum's "Daniel's Story" exhibit, for example, in this young German, Yiddish-speaking boy's room, there are his soccer trophies and his father's war medals — but where are his religious texts, or his father's tefillin, or tickets to the Yiddish Theatre? What's missing, Horn says, "is the actual culture that was destroyed in the Holocaust."

And the reason for this erasure is that anti-bigotry education has stressed that "we're all just like everyone else." But if "you're really curious about us" you'll find out that Jews are different. "Uncoolness is Judaism's brand," she said.

Shichtman mentioned the protests here in Ann Arbor at Beth Israel Congregation, and asked her how to deal with that kind of rhetoric. Ms. Horn immediately said, "You call it out." And she urged that we assert the vitality and complexity of Jewish life, and that we explain it, and stand up for it — against an antisemitism that is decidedly on the rise.

Horn was also incredibly gracious throughout the evening, thanking her hosts for making her feel so welcome in Ann Arbor, and spending time speaking with guests and signing books for anyone who asked — both before the program and well after it was over.

The Main Event is Federation's premier annual fundraising and community event, which not only celebrates the bonds of partnership and friendship but also helps to raise the financial support necessary to maintain and sustain Jewish organizations locally, nationally, and around the world. There was a brief pause during the evening for those who wished to make an additional pledge or gift to the Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor's 2022 Annual Community Campaign.

Due to both the pandemic and the alarming rise in antisemitism, Federation is even more focused on and committed to helping those with the greatest needs, and it is asking those who are fortunate enough to be able to do so to please consider giving generously — now, more than ever.

In a survey conducted by Federation a couple of years ago, community members made it clear that those who've been in the habit of attending Federation's Main Event recognize it as their single best chance to enjoy a community-wide celebration with friends and acquaintances. They've also fallen in love with and look forward to the Main Event's schmooze time, which is why more than an hour was devoted to noshing and mingling before the formal program commenced — even for those on Zoom, who kept up a lively discussion of their own in the chat, posting, "Incredible program!!" "Wonderful and thought provoking." "Wow! Thank you." "Terrific! I learned a great deal tonight." And "Awesome, awesome."

For questions about Main Event, about how to get involved in Federation, or for any other questions or comments, visit www.JewishAnnArbor.org, email info@jewishannarbor.org, or call (734) 773-3535. ■

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Remembering our beloved, cherished, deeply respected, and truly admired friend and steadfast supporter, Carol Amster z"l.

We reflect on all the great contributions she and her late husband Herb z"l made to Jewish Family Services of Washtenaw County. We are particularly grateful for Carol's decision to commemorate Herb's legacy in creating The Herb Amster Center at JFS. The Center embodies and actualizes advice Herb Amster often gave JFS to bring sustainability to the agency through long-term financial stability. His motto was, "Do good things, but remember the bottom line so you can do more good things."

Building upon the breadth and depth of knowledge and experience within JFS, The Herb Amster Center affords this venerable agency the opportunity to offer clinical, behavioral, transportation, interpretation, training and caregiving expertise to individuals, organizations, and third-party payers that purchase these services — in order to continue serving those in the community who cannot.

A MESSAGE FROM THE JFS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

For the past ten years, Carol embraced the opportunity to continue Herb's impact on JFS and its clients. She took up the mantle of support, mentorship, and enthusiasm for JFS and The Herb Amster Center. She brought her passion, energy, humor, and experience in both general and Jewish communal service. She inspired us. She became part of the JFS team, for which we are forever grateful. We have lost a precious friend and partner. Carol's community leadership will continue to be a blessing to us all.

EILEEN FREED, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, JEWISH FEDERATION OF GREATER ANN ARBOR

Carol's concept of honoring the memory of her beloved husband Herb z"l by putting his words into action is a reflection of the values and qualities that made her such an effective community leader. Compassionate, caring for those on the edges of society, forward-thinking, innovative, devoted – to Herb and to the community. Carol was a woman with high expectations for herself and others whose vision and action will have a lasting impact on JFS's ability to serve the community for generations to come.

ANYA ABRAMZON CEO, JFS

We are deeply grateful to Carol and her family for giving us the incredible gift to carry on Herb's name through the transformative work of the entrepreneurial engine of Jewish Family Services—The Herb Amster Center. For the last ten years, Carol had been a key member of the Amster Center's think tank and its biggest cheerleader. Her excitement, enthusiasm, unwavering support, and endless generosity gave us strength and instilled confidence when we needed it most. We are profoundly grateful for the legacy she leaves behind and will miss her dearly.

NORMAN HERBERT, CHAIR OF THE HERB AMSTER CENTER PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL

It was entrepreneur Herb Amster that planted the seed for JFS to take advantage of its services to generate earned revenue as a way to reduce the Agency's dependency on foundation grants. Carol enabled the work and blessed the use of Herb's name to be associated with the endeavor referred to as the Amster Center. JFS annual earned revenue when the Amster Center was started about ten years ago was less than $10,000. In 2021, earned revenue approximated $461,000, about 8% of the operating budget. Much of it is derived from the Thrive Counseling services. The Amsters' comfort with new initiatives in support of addressing the needs of the JFS clients is unique. They leave a legacy that will only continue to grow over the years – we've been blessed with their trust and long-term support.

MARK BERG, JFS BOARD, VP FACILITIES

Carol was a dear friend to JFS and the entire Jewish community. We will all miss her special radiance, strength of purpose, and wise counsel.

A rich tapestry of experiences over the years shaped Carol's intense desire to not only give, but to create a legacy; Carol authentically lived the Jewish value of Tikkun Olam (repairing the world) and believed it was critical to teach by example. Both Carol and Herb understood the impact of using their name to lead the way. More than anything, Carol hoped that future generations in her family will continue the tradition of giving. "To see the smiles on their faces when you give...to see how happy people are...that's the legacy."

SARAH OKIN, JFS' FIRST DIRECTOR OF THE HERB AMSTER CENTER

It was as the first Director of The Herb Amster Center that I had the immense honor, and great pleasure, of meeting Carol Amster. It was a huge responsibility: representing Herb and Carol in our community and -- along with Carol, Norman Herbert, Anya, and the rest of our Amster Center Council -- building something that would sustain both JFS as a whole, as well as Herb's legacy. I fell in love with Carol during our first meeting: her fierce spirit, bright mind and kind soul inspired me to 'do good things', and today I'm humbled to say that the memory of both these fine people continues to motivate me to contribute to our Jewish community in meaningful ways. May the memory of these two giants be a blessing for us all.

JOANNE JARVI, IMMEDIATE PAST DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT FOR THE AMSTER CENTER

Carol Amster has described JFS "as a place of permanent legacy for my husband Herb of blessed memory." What has taken place within JFS—a nonprofit, social service agency—since the creation of The Herb Amster Center can be described as nothing less than a massive culture shift. That shift, that energy, that push, that constant focus on the quality of services and the business of the services is due to Carol Amster and HER spirit, her tenacity, her focus that created this LIVING memorial. Carol's BEING made us smarter, stronger and more sustainable.

Todd Gitlin, leftist Jewish writer with strong attachment to Israel, dies at 79

Ron Kampeas, originally for the JTA

Todd Gitlin became the archetype of the 1960s radical not just by leading protests against the Vietnam War and apartheid, but by questioning the movements he helped found.

The prophet-in-his-own-land persona Gitlin fashioned for himself, alienating to a degree his cohort from his campus days, extended to his Jewish profile. He rebuked fellow leftists for their bids to make Israel a pariah, while remaining a fierce critic of Israel's occupation.

Gitlin died February 5 in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, at age 79. He had been hospitalized in December after a massive heart attack and had suffered renal failure.

Gitlin was just 20 in 1963 when he served as president of Students for a Democratic Society, the group that would throughout the rest of the decade spearhead student protests against the Vietnam War and South African apartheid and for civil rights at home.

At that age, Gitlin, born and raised in New York City, had already graduated from Harvard and was getting his master's degree in political science from the University of Michigan; he went on to get a doctorate from the University of California, Berkeley. When he died, he was a professor at Columbia University.

He once said he did not plan a career outside of radicalism, but he settled into a chronicler of a time that had shaped his country. His best-known work, *The Sixties: Years of Hope, Days of Rage*, was published in 1987, but it was a line in another book published in 1995, *The Twilight of Common Dreams: Why America Is Wracked by Culture War* that best came to define him: "While the right has been busy taking the White House, the left has been marching on the English department."

His point was that the left had become obsessed with identity and was not focused enough on the inequities that had underscored the dreams of revolution in the 1960s.

"His legacy was that you could do research in a way that was not an ivory tower, you could help people understand the power and structure of the country you were living in and do something about it," said Rabbi Arthur Waskow, the founder of the Shalom Center in Philadelphia, who had known Gitlin since their days in Students for Democratic Society.

Gitlin cast a jaundiced eye on the media, arguing that it bound Americans to the illusions a corporate state foisted upon them. "Ozzie and Harriet is a lie," he said of the 1950s TV show that became a template for situation comedy. In the same 1989 interview with the New York Times, he recalled sitting in a theater cringing watching *The Big Chill*, the hit 1983 movie that commodified and sanitized the experience of his generation, while everyone around him loved it.

The corrosive effects of the media culminated for him in the election to the presidency of a reality TV star, and he found himself joining in what might have once been unthinkable alliances in seeking to undo the legacy of Donald Trump.

Gitlin joined an Anti-Defamation League task force in 2016 to examine the death threats endured by journalists who covered Trump's election that year. Last year he and Bill Kristol, a Republican who soured on Trump but remains conservative in his outlook, spearheaded an open letter by liberals and conservatives warning of the threat Trump continued to pose to democracy.

"Todd was a witty, kind and shrewd co-conspirator," Kristol said on Twitter.

Waskow said Gitlin's allergy to identity politics extended to the Freedom Seder Waskow wrote after the 1968 assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. and debuted at a civil rights seder in 1969 — a seder that has become a symbol in the Jewish social justice movement.

"He misunderstood it," Waskow said. "He thought it would contribute to distracting people from the big picture of what needed to be changed in American society. He thought it was a way of drawing people into concern with their Jewishness to the detriment of their concern with what he saw as major American issues, structural issues in American society."

Yet Gitlin found himself drawn to his Jewish identity, particularly as it was expressed through an affinity for Israel.

At a symposium organized in 2011 by the magazine *Dissent*, he vividly depicted how conflicted he was about the Jewish state.

"In the world I was born into, Israel was an emotion wrapped in an idea," Gitlin said. "Simply by existing, the Jewish state was a portal to deliverance, and since I had been carried through that portal at birth, so to speak, a sense of deliverance was my default emotion."

Describing an upbringing in which singing "Hatikvah," the Israeli national anthem, was "far more vivid and rapturous" than "The Star-Spangled Banner," he said he remained emotionally invested in Israel.

"In 1973, news that Egyptian forces had crossed the Suez Canal sent me in tears to a San Francisco shul I had never set foot in before, knowing acutely, desperately, that if the state of Israel was going to be destroyed, I wanted to receive the news among Jews," he said. "In 1975, driving in San Francisco, when I heard on the radio about the U.N. General Assembly passing the infamous 'Zionism = racism' resolution, written in Orwellian duckspeak, I swore out loud my revulsion that in a world of nations, all of which are founded on mythic ideas with various downsides, one, in particular, should have been singled out for condemnation. I puffed myself up to declare that Israel wasn't going to be destroyed: Over my dead body."

The very affinity he felt for Israel made him despair when, he said, it was terrorizing Palestinian civilians.

"Today, the state of Israel feels to me like a personal trauma, a huge, heartbreaking disappointment, a world-historical opportunity forgone, a danger to the Jews, a burden — and also a nation to which, like it or not, I am fastened, where people I love and admire carry on an immensely, grievously difficult struggle for decency against tall odds."

For the next decade, Gitlin inhabited a space between damning Israel's occupation and defending its existence: In 2014, he joined a collective call condemning boycotts of Israeli academics; in 2016 he joined a collective call for boycotts of settlement goods.

Gitlin was a gregarious writer, enveloping his targets in affection even as he lacerated what he believed were their lapses of critical thinking. In November, he took to *The Forward* to blast Sally Rooney, the millennial Irish novelist who would not allow her work to be published in Israel.

"No contemporary writer has gotten under my skin as you have," he began, saying he was "astonished" by her facility for dialogue and for making vivid "the damages of class."

He said as appalled as he was by Israel's occupation, he could not support her boycott. "The freedom of literature is the enemy of the locked-up mind," he wrote. "Your own work is a splendid tribute to the spirit that strives to think its way out of prisons and gropes its way toward a more beautiful world."

He was appalled, his friend Jo-Ann Mort said, at likening Israel's practices to South African Apartheid, as someone who had led protests against the system of racial segregation in the 1960s.

"He said there are two competing rights" to the land in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, "so BDS doesn't make any sense," Mort said in an interview, referring to the movement to boycott, divest from and sanction Israel.

Mort, a communications adviser to an array of groups and movements on the left, paid tribute to Gitlin in a Facebook post, writing, "In my little world of left-wing Zionism he was an important voice of steadfastness and honesty."

Mort said in the interview that Gitlin would be sorely missed among those on the American left who are attached to Israel.

"The loss is real, in terms of someone who had that stature as a public intellectual, there are not a lot of people left like that," she said.

Gitlin is survived by his third wife, Laurel Ann Cook; a sister, Judy Gitlin; and three stepchildren. ■

JEAN & SAMUEL FRANKEL CENTER FOR JUDAIC STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Frankel Events

March 2022

Go to lsa.umich.edu/judaic for more information.

"What Does it Mean to Keep a Secret?" Film Series

March 10, 4pm

Documenting Secret Origins

Dr. Deborah Porter, University of Washington, Seattle
Hybrid
Zoom Registration:
https://myumi.ch/G11Qg
North Quad Room 2435

March 17, 4pm

Screening of "Blue Box" by Michal Weits

Chemistry Building Room 1800
Virtual stream registration:
https://forms.gle/UMbR5kqQyYEvz5ay9
The link will be available to stream March 17-20

March 24, 4pm

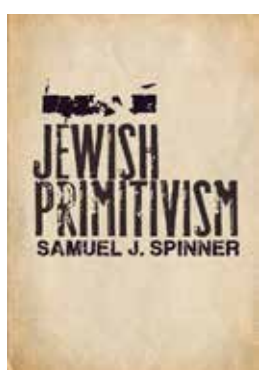
Screening of "How to Say Silence" by Shir Newman

Chemistry Building Room 1800
Virtual stream registration:
https://forms.gle/qPARJYoLajxT7jpL7
The link will be available to stream March 24-27

March 25, 12pm

Virtual Panel

Zoom Registration:
https://myumi.ch/RWWR8
The film screenings will be followed by a virtual panel with Deborah Porter and both of the films' directors, Michal Weitz and Shir Newman.



The Society of Savage Jews: The Politics of Jewish Primitivism

Sam Spinner
March 22, 4pm
Hybrid, 2022 South Thayer Building
Zoom Registration:
https://myumi.ch/844Z6

Religion and Critical Theory: Muhammad Iqbal and Walter Benjamin

Asad Dandia
in collaboration with the Jewish-Muslim Research Network
March 31, 12pm
Zoom Registration:
https://myumi.ch/Ek8AM

All events are free. If you have a disability that requires a reasonable accommodation, please contact the Frankel Center office.

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Muriel Rukeyser

HOUDINI

LOCKS | KEYS | FREEDOM

The Muriel Rukeyser Living Archive presents four staged readings of Rukeyser's musical ***Houdini***, with the help of a generous grant from the Michigan Humanities–an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities–as well as the support of EMU's Center for Jewish Studies and the English Department.

March 20 | 2 p.m.
Sponberg Theatre
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, Michigan
This event will be live streamed, preceded by a webinar, at 11 a.m., featuring talks and conversation with three experts: Jan Freeman, Stefania Heim, and Matthew Solomon.

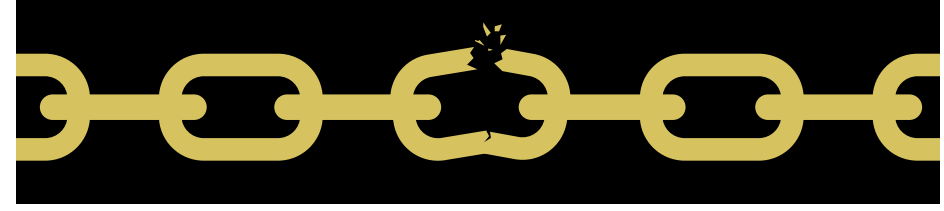
March 24 | 7 p.m.
Riverside Arts Center
Ypsilanti, Michigan

March 26 | 8 p.m.
March 27 | 3 p.m.
Matrix Theatre
Detroit, Michigan

SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

MI Humanities
CENTER FOR JEWISH STUDIES
EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

NOTHING ON EARTH CAN HOLD HOUDINI A PRISONER



Calendar

March 2022

As our community eases into in-person events with sensitivity to changing pandemic safety, always check websites or call for updates before planning to attend anything listed here and for prayer services.

Thursday 1

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11a.m. and 8 p.m.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose: TBE. 7:30 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday – for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Torah on Tap — Seeing Double: Exploring the two months of Adar and the Leap Year: AAOM. At HOMES Brewery. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 2

Rosh Hodesh Adar

Yiddish tish (Virtual) (Yiddish Conversation & Reading Group): Zoom. About 45 minutes each of conversation and reading. Free and open to all those interested in Yiddish language, literature, and culture, no matter what level of proficiency. For more information, to get the link, and to make certain that we are meeting on a specific day, please email Elliot H. Gertel at egertel@umich.edu at least one day before scheduled meeting day every Wednesday (except major Jewish holidays). 2 p.m.

JLI Meditation from Sinai: Chabad. Divine spirituality to help you think, feel and live deeper. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC Join the Theology Book Club to read and discuss books on Jewish thought and beliefs. Contact Paul Shifrin at (248) 514-7276 for more information. 8 p.m.

Thursday 3

Rosh Hodesh

Jewish Prayer: Finding Our Way in the History, Meaning, and Spirituality of our Worship Service: TBE. Rabbi Whinston leads discussion. 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Spirituality Book Club with Cantor Emerita Annie Rose: TBE. 12 p.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Women's Rosh Chodesh Circle - Adar II: TBE. 6:30 p.m.

Rosh Hodesh Adar II Circle: Pardes Hannah. 7 p.m.

Leading from the Center: A Davening Workshop: BIC. Deborah Sacks Mintz will guide learners in an exploration of technical skills, as well as strategies for effectively building and sustaining community through davening. This masterclass for daveneras and Shelichi Tzibbur of all levels, both experienced and novice! Please note this is an in-person session only. 7 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 4

Rosh Hodesh Adar II

Candle Lighting 6:10 p.m. Pekudei

Rosh Hodesh Online Minyan: Pardes Hannah. Adar II. 9 a.m.

Singing in the Divine: BIC. With Deborah Sacks Mintz. Hors d'oeuvres reception followed by Boi Kallah, Shabbat Hamaalka. Through an exploration of singing as a spiritual practice, we'll learn new melodies, reconnect with familiar sounds, and ready ourselves for Shabbat. 5:30 p.m.

Saturday 5

Havdallah 7:11 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Singing through the Sea, Lamenting at the River: Song Narratives in Tanakh: BIC. With Deborah Sacks Mintz. 1:00 p.m.

Havdalah Concert and Melava Malka: BIC. With Deborah Sacks Mintz. Bid farewell to Shabbat in song and keep the ruach going with an evening of spiritual music. 7:30 p.m.

Friday 6

Hamentashen Bake. AAOM. Open to kids of all ages. In a heated, outside backyard of a community member. 9:30 a.m.

Hamantashen Fundraising Sale: WTBE. Last day to order. Pick up March 13 and March 16 at WTBE gift shop.

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. 11 a.m.

Monday 7

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. All are invited to join our Talmud study class. We read the text in Hebrew but an English translation is available and all discussions will be in English so no familiarity with Hebrew is required. We will first study a selection from the beginning of the Talmudic tractate of Sukkah dealing with an interesting question concerning the building of a Sukkah. Then we will turn to a section from the tractate of Pesachim, concerning the Pesach Seder. 4 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7:30 p.m.

Tuesday 8

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday–for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 9

Purim Lunch and Learn: AAOM. Join us over zoom to explore themes of Purim. Zoom Link: https://bit.ly/PurimLunchandLearn. 12:30 p.m.

Yiddish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

JLI Meditation from Sinai: Chabad. Divine spirituality to help you think, feel and live deeper. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 10

Jewish Prayer: Finding Our Way in the History, Meaning, and Spirituality of our Worship Service: TBE. Rabbi Whinston leads discussion. 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

"What Does It Mean to Keep a Secret?" Film Series Documenting Secret Origins: Frankel Center. Deborah Porter, Hybrid, 2435 North Quad Zoom Registration: lsa.umich.edu/judaic/news-events/. 4 p.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 11

Candle Lighting 6:19 p.m.

Vayikra/ Shabbat Zachor

Shabbat Dinner and Games: JYP and Hillel. At 1429 Hill St. 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 12

Havdallah 7:19 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Second Saturday Shabbat Morning Service: AARC. Led by Rabbi Ora Nitkin-Kaner. Everyone is welcome! Zoom link will be sent out the week before the event. Ta'Shma at 10 a.m. Service 10:30 a.m. to noon.

Shabbat Morning Service: Pardes Hannah. 10 a.m.

From Panera to Electric Cars: Monthly Topics in Jewish Law: BIC. May one bicycle on Shabbat? Is eating a grilled cheese at Panera kosher? Can one make minyan through Zoom? Is an LBGTQ ketubah halakhically permitted? Rav Nadav tackles contemporary topics in Jewish law, often sharing the best of Conservative Movement Responsa. Hybrid format (i.e. both in person and streaming). Zoom links are available on the Beth Israel website (www.bethisrael-aa.org). 12:15 p.m.

Sunday 13

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Ice skating and hot cocoa at Ice Skating at Veterans Memorial Pool and Ice Arena. AAOM. 1 p.m.

Joint Purim Celebration: TBE and BIC. Living Megillah Walk at County Farm Park County Farm Park. Attendees will get to interact with characters from the Purim story on a walk through the newly budding community gardens. Ask Vashti your questions and boo Haman! Wear your best costume. Hamantaschen, crafts, games, and more in the main pavilion. Fun for all ages. 2:30 - 4:00 p.m.

Monday 14

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 4 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 15

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday – for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 16

Erev Purim

Yiddish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

Purim Game Night with Megillah Reading. AARC. 6 p.m.

Megillah Family and Fun Reading: TBE and BIC. Family-Friendly Purim Service with selections from the Megillah & Spiel MC'd by Rav Nadav and Rabbi Josh. Wear your favorite costume and come boo Haman! 6:30 p.m.

Full Megillah Reading: TBE. 8:00 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Purim Celebration: Chabad. 8:15 p.m.

Thursday 17

Purim

Purim: Chabad. 7:30 a.m.

Purim in Morocco: Chabad. Ann Arbor Senior Center, 1320 Baldwin. Adult $20, Child, $15, Family $45. Megilla reading 5:45 p.m. Dinner and Festivities 6:45 p.m.

Women's Megillah reading. AAOM. All women are welcomed to join us for festive megillah reading at a community member's house. 9:45 a.m.

Jewish Prayer: Finding Our Way in the History, Meaning, and Spirituality of our Worship

Service: TBE. Rabbi Whinston leads discussion. 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

"What Does It Mean to Keep a Secret?" Film Series: Frankel Center. "Blue Box" by Michal Weits film screening. Chemistry Building Room 1800 Virtual stream registration: lsa.umich.edu/judaic/news-events/. The link will be available to stream March 17-20. 4.p.m

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Purim seuda (festive meal) to celebrate Purim. AAOM. Costume parade for kids of all ages and kids at heart! 6 p.m.

Friday 18

Candle Lighting 7:27 p.m. Tzav

Kohenet Kabbalat Shabbat: Pardes Hannah. 6:30 p.m.

Friday 19

Havdallah 8:28 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Sunday 20

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. 11 a.m.

Reimagining 21st Century Jewish Community: If we restructured the Jewish community to flourish now and in the future, what would it look like? Do legacy organizations and denominations meet the needs of a changing community? What have we learned so far in the 21st Century that we can apply to community building? Bring your creative ideas to the TBE sanctuary for a hybrid discussion (join in person or on live Zoom) hosted by Rabbi Josh Whinston, Clare Kinberg, and Rachel Levy. 3 p.m.

Muriel Rukeyer's Houdini, a staged reading: EMU Jewish Studies. Sponberg Theatre, EMU. 2 p.m.

Monday 21

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 4 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Tuesday 22

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

The Society of Savage Jews: The Politics of Jewish Primitivism: Frankel Center Sam Spinner. Hybrid, 2022 South Thayer Building https://myumi.ch/844Z6. 4 p.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday – for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 23

Parsha Lunch and Learn: AAOM. 12:30 p.m.

Yiddish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

JLI Meditation from Sinai: Chabad. Divine spirituality to help you think, feel and live deeper. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 24

Jewish Prayer: Finding Our Way in the History, Meaning, and Spirituality of our Worship Service: TBE. Rabbi Whinston leads discussion.

10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

"What Does It Mean to Keep a Secret?" Film Series: Frankel Center. Screening of "How to Say Silence" by Shir Newman, Chemistry Building Room 1800 Virtual stream registration: lsa.umich.edu/judaic/news-events/. The link will be available to stream March 24-27. 4 p.m.

Meditation with Claire Weiner: TBE. 5 p.m.

Muriel Rukeyer's Houdini, a staged reading: EMU Jewish Studies. Riverside Arts Center, Ypsilanti. 7 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Friday 25

Candle Lighting 7:35 p.m. Shemini

"What Does It Mean to Keep a Secret?" Film Series: Frankel Center. Panel discussion, Deborah Porter & Ruth Tsoffar with directors Shir Newman & Michal Weits. Virtual Zoom registration: lsa.umich.edu/judaic/news-events/. 12 p.m.

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat. AARC. On Zoom, e-mail: aarcgillian@gmail.com. 6:30 p.m.

Saturday 26

Havdallah 8:36 p.m.

Torah Study: TBE. Zoom. Weekly discussion of the Torah portion led by Rabbi Whinston 8:50–9:50 a.m.

Serenity Shabbat: BIC. Person and Zoom. Serenity Shabbat, hosted by various congregations, focuses on addiction awareness and the wisdom of Jewish tradition as it related to the spiritual practice of recovery. Everyone is welcome, including members of the recovery community, friends and family who have been affected by a loved one's addiction, and anyone interested in this unique spiritual experience! 9:30 a.m.

Muriel Rukeyer's Houdini, a staged reading: EMU Jewish Studies. Matrix Theatre, Detroit. 8 p.m.

Sunday 27

Tanya–Jewish Mysticism: Chabad. Delve into the basic text of Chassidim and discover the beauty and depth of Judaism. **11 a.m.**

Climate Justice and the Jewish Community: A Call to Action Through Dialogue: JCLP. Zoom conversation. 1 p.m.

Muriel Rukeyer's Houdini, a staged reading: EMU Jewish Studies. Matrix Theatre, Detroit. 3 p.m.

Monday 28

Talmud Study with Rabbi Dobrusin: BIC. 4 p.m.

Adult B'nai Mitzvah Class: TBE. 6 p.m.

Women's Torah Study: TBE. For questions, contact Cantor Regina Hayut at cantorhayut@templebethemeth.org. 7 p.m.

Climate Action Plan: TBE's Dayenu Circle. How you can get involved. On Zoom. 7 p.m.

Thursday 29

Twenty-five-minute Mindfulness with Jewish Spiritual Director Linda Greene: TBE and Pardes Hannah. 8:30 a.m.

Talmud Tuesdays w/ Rabbi Alter: TBE. 11 a.m. and 8 p.m.

Tea and Torah on Tuesday – for Women: Chabad. 8 p.m.

Wednesday 30

Yiddish tish Conversation & Reading Group: Every Wednesday, see above. 2 p.m.

JLI Meditation from Sinai: Chabad. Divine spirituality to help you think, feel and live deeper. 7:30 p.m.

Theology Book Club: BIC 8 p.m.

Thursday 31

Jewish Prayer: Finding Our Way in the History, Meaning, and Spirituality of our Worship Service: TBE. Rabbi Whinston leads discussion. 10:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Biblical Book Club: TBE. Cantor Hayut leads discussion. 11 a.m.

Backdoor Food Pantry Open: TBE. 4–7 p.m.

Talmud–Jewish Civil Law: Chabad. 8 p.m. ■

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Adventure Awaits!

Pardes Hannah events in March

All events are in Zoom unless otherwise noted. Please check our website (https://pardeshannah.org/) for the latest information, including registration links, on these or any of our ongoing services, rituals, circles, and teachings or call Renee Robbins at 734-904-5459.

Rosh Chodesh Adar II Circle
Thursday, March 3, 7–8:30 p.m.

Rosh Chodesh Adar II Online Minyan
Friday, March 4, 9–10:15 a.m.

Shabbat Morning Services
Saturday, March 12, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Kohenet Kabbalat Shabbat
Friday, March 18, 6:30–7:30 p.m.

Twenty-five Minute Mindfulness w/ Linda Greene, Jewish Spiritual Director (Cosponsored with Temple Beth Emeth)
Weekly on Tuesday, 8:30–9 a.m. ■

Phone numbers, websites and addresses of organizations frequently listed in the calendar:

Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan (AAOM): 1429 Hill Street, *248-408-3269, annarborminyan.org*

Ann Arbor Reconstructionist Congregation (AARC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, *734.445.1910, aarecon.org*

Beth Israel Congregation (BIC): 2000 Washtenaw Ave, 734-665-9897, *bethisrael-aa.org*

Chabad House: 715 Hill Street, 734-995-3276, jewmich.com

Frankel Center: 202 S. Thayer St., lsa.umich.edu/judaic/

Jewish Community Center (JCC): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 745-971-0990, jccannarbor.org

Jewish Cultural Society (JCS): 2935 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-975-9872, jewishculturalsociety.org

Jewish Family Services (JFS): 2245 South State Street, 734-769-0209, jfsannarbor.org

Jewish Federation: 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, 734-677-0100, jewishannarbor.org

Pardes Hannah: 2010 Washtenaw Ave, 734-761-5324, pardeshannah.org

Temple Beth Emeth (TBE): 2309 Packard Road, 734-665-4744, templebethemeth.org

UM Hillel: 1429 Hill Street 734-769-0500, michiganhillel.org ■

AARC events in March

Second Saturday Shabbat Service, Saturday March 12

10 a.m. Ta Shma/Come and Learn,
10:30 a.m. Service.
This service will on ZOOM ONLY. Meditation, prayer, discussion, community. Everyone is welcome!

Purim 2022 March 16, 6–8 p.m.
Join us for Purim 2022, our theme this year will be Game Night! Dress up as your favorite board game character, video game character, game show personality, athlete, etc. We will have a Megillah reading, followed by a congregation-wide game night!

Fourth Friday Kabbalat Shabbat Service, Friday March 25, 6:30 p.m.
Come connect with community, rest, recharge, rejuvenate. Everyone welcome.

Sunday, March 27
Annual Communal Conversation on Climate and Environmental Justice in the Jewish Community with the Jewish Communal Leadership Program. AARC is cosponsoring this event. ■

Orthodox Minyan March events

For all events, please contact rabbayael@annarborminyan.org for location or with any questions.

Tuesday, March 1, 8 p.m.
Torah on Tap — Seeing Double: Exploring the two months of Adar and the Leap Year. Join us two days before the second Rosh Chodesh (New Moon) Adar to find out why and what it means for us. At HOMES Brewery.

Sunday, March 6, 9:30 a.m.
Hamentashen Bake. We will kick off the month of Adar by making hamentashen to celebrate Purim. Join us to make hamentashen with your favorite filling, hear a Purim story, and sing some songs! Open to kids of all ages. In a heated, outside backyard of a community member.

Wednesday, March 9, 12:30 p.m.
Purim Lunch and Learn: Join us over zoom to explore themes of Purim. Zoom Link: https://bit.ly/PurimLunchandLearn

Sunday, March 13, 1–2:30 p.m.
Join your AAOM friends for a fun afternoon of ice skating and hot cocoa at Ice Skating at Veterans Memorial Pool and Ice Arena.

Thursday, March 17, 9:45 a.m.
Women's Megillah reading. All women are welcomed to join us for festive megillah reading at a community member's house.

Thursday, March 17, 6 p.m.
Join the AAOM for a Purim seuda (festive meal) to celebrate Purim. We will start the evening with a costume parade for kids of all ages and kids at heart!

Wednesday, March 23, 12:30 p.m.
Parsha Lunch and Learn. Join us to explore themes of the weekly Torah portion in the book of Exodus. Zoom Link: https://bit.ly/ParshaLunchandLearn ■

Greece: Go buy some lemons

Lonnie Sussman, special to the WJN

Some years ago, I travelled to Greece with two dear friends. We spent a few nights in Athens to see the Parthenon and view many of the treasures in the new museum containing the statues and artifacts that were no longer on the hill or had been returned from the European museums that had them in their collections. We had a day trip to Delphi (not Delhi) and felt the power of that site. I've never seen such an intense blue sky or body of water as we saw at Delphi. Then we flew to the island of Santorini where the blue of the sky and water was even more intense. We stayed in one of those iconic blue domed white houses that are in all the travel posters. It was a fantastic trip, and I couldn't wait to return to see other areas of this beautiful country. I started to plan a trip for the next year, but our son told us his wedding would be that May. Then I thought we could go the following year, but a grandchild was due that May. These life events were more wonderful than any travel.

Last month I "traveled" with the Baltimore Zionist District on a trip to Jewish Greece. Of course, this was presented on Zoom. I confess not knowing much about the Jewish communities in Greece. I suspect that many who read this column have ancestors who came from Eastern Europe and don't know about this long history either.

The earliest community settled during the Hellenistic period in the 3rd century BCE. Their descendants still have a synagogue in New York City. Another group is known as the Romaniote, those who arrived a few hundred years later with the Roman conquests. A few hundred years after that, the Jews who escaped the Spanish Inquisition arrived with their Sephardi traditions. The islands of Salonika, Corfu, and Rhodes had the largest Jewish populations before the war, but more than 80% of them were murdered. Today the Jewish community is found mainly in Athens.

I do my research in a lot of cookbooks, blogs, and online sites. From this reading I learned about another cookbook that sounds interesting. It is *The Cookbook of the Jews of Greece* by Nicholas Stavroulakis. Please let me know if any of you have this. I would love to look at it Sadly, it costs hundreds of dollars! Sigh.

Go buy some lemons, good olive oil, fresh oregano, and thyme (ok, use dried if you don't have the fresh). Get some fresh or frozen spinach or sturdy greens, grape leaves, good tomatoes (Campari are good this time of year), feta cheese, and cucumbers. I'm dreaming of the blue skies and blue water. Opa!!

Braised Greens Greek Style

I found an article written by Dennis Wasko in the March 2011 *Jerusalem Post* about the history of the Jews in Greece that included this recipe. I've included a variation of it from Joan Nathan's cookbook *King Solomon's Table* as well.

¼ cup olive oil
1 small, finely diced onion
4 to 6 garlic cloves, sliced
2 lb greens — use kale, chard, collards, or a combination (remove the tough stems) and roughly chop the leaves
1 cup tomato puree
2 tbs lemon juice
Salt and pepper to taste

Use a large enough saucepan or pot and put it on low heat. Add the olive oil, onions, and garlic along with some salt and pepper and cover the pot. Sweat the onions and garlic for about 10–15 minutes until they are translucent, not browned. Add in everything else, stir to combine and re-cover the pot. Keep the heat low as you will cook this gently for about an hour. Check to make sure there is enough liquid and add a little water if the greens get too dry. Check the seasoning and serve with additional olive oil if you like.

Here is the version from Joan Nathan's book. It includes chickpeas and vegetable broth. Use an oven-safe pot. Put the chickpeas in 1 cup of water and bring to a simmer. Then add either 4 sliced scallions or ½ chopped onion, the vegetable broth (1 cup), salt and pepper. Fold into the pot 2 pounds of fresh spinach or three 10-ounce packages of frozen chopped spinach, thawed and drained. Cover the pot and bake it in the oven at 350 degrees for an hour. Remove from the oven and stir in almost an entire bunch of chopped dill. Save about 4 tbs for sprinkling on top. Add ½ bunch of chopped parsley, saving a few tablespoons for serving on top as well. Put the pot back in the oven for another 30 minutes but check to make sure it's not too dry. Add a little water if necessary. Take the zpot out of the oven and add the juice of ½ a lemon. Sprinkle the reserved herbs on top and serve with rice.

Eggplant and Feta Salad

The Jewish Kitchen by Clarissa Hyman

serves 4 as an appetizer

This is a super simple dish that is served with pita and olives

Eggplants weighing about 3-1/2 pounds (2 large ones)
7 oz Feta cheese — there is a yummy Feta at Trader Joe's that comes from Israel
2 tbs extra virgin olive oil or to taste

Grill or roast the eggplants until they are blistered and black on the outside and soft and smokey on the inside. When they are cool enough to handle, peel the skin off and press to remove the excess liquid. Mash with a fork then thoroughly mash in the feta which you will crumble. Drizzle with olive oil and mix to a smooth paste.

Greek Meatballs

The Book of Jewish Food, by Claudia Roden

serves 4

There are many recipes from Salonika and here is one of them. The meat is secondary to the spinach.

14 oz spinach, washed and tough stems removed, squeeze out the water
7 oz ground meat, beef, or lamb
2 slices of bread, crusts removed and soaked in water and squeezed dry
2 eggs
Salt and pepper to taste
¼ tsp nutmeg
Flour to roll the balls in
Neutral oil for frying

Steam the spinach in a pan with a lid for about a minute. No need to add water as they will still have some on them even after squeezing, then drain again. The goal is to have the spinach as dry as possible. Use a food processor and add the spices and the meat and blend. The mixture will be very soft and not that easy to handle. Shape into little flat cakes and dip them in flour. Fry in shallow oil and turn to brown them on both sides. Drain on paper towels. These can be served either hot or cold.

Fish in Egg and Lemon Sauce

The Book of Jewish Food, by Claudia Roden

Serves 4

This is only one of several fascinating cookbooks that include the history of Jewish communities and their food. She writes "If I have to name one city that was famous for this specialty, it is Salonika." Egg and lemon sauce is well known in Sephardi cooking as well as in countries not associated with Greece.

2 lbs of white fish fillets – you can use sole, haddock, cod, halibut, or swordfish
Salt and pepper (recommended white pepper but I never use that so black pepper)
2 tbs olive oil
Juice of 1 lemon
2 eggs
3 tbs chopped parsley

Place the fish in a pan in one layer and pour in just enough water to cover. Add the salt and pepper, olive oil, and half the lemon juice. Slowly bring the water to a boil and poach gently, just so the water barely bubbles for 5–10 minutes, or until the fish begins to flake. Lift out the fish fillets, carefully, and place on a serving platter but leave the water in the pan. There should be about 1 cup of water left. Now for the sauce, beat the eggs with the rest of the lemon juice and add in a few tablespoons of the cooking water. Then pour the mixture into the pan with the hot cooking water while stirring constantly over a very low flame (you do not want scrambled eggs). The mixture will slowly thicken but do not let it boil. Add the parsley, pour the sauce over the fish, cover it with plastic wrap and refrigerate. This dish is served cold. Another version of the sauce is found in that cookbook I mentioned above, by Nicholas Stavoulakis, *The Cookbook of the Jews of Greece*. It includes the 2 eggs, 4 to 5 cloves of garlic, pressed, salt and pepper and the juice of 2 lemons. Then add ½ cup of white wine and pour into pan and stir constantly over low heat until the sauce thickens.

Fideos Tostados, Toasted Pasta in a Cinnamon-Spiked Tomato Sauce

King Solomon's Table by Joan Nathan

Serves 8

Joan Nathan writes that she learned how to make the tomato sauce from a cooking school on the Greek island of Kea but the recipe comes from the island of Rhodes.

Sauce
2 tbs olive oil
½ a large red onion, chopped, about 1 cup
1 tbs tomato paste
1 cup sweet wine like Manischewitz or Marsala
1 tsp pepper or ¼ tsp crushed red pepper flakes
½ cup dried currants or raisins
One 28-oz can whole plum tomatoes (or 3 pounds whole fresh tomatoes)
1 cinnamon stick or 1–2 tsp ground cinnamon
Two 4-inch pieces of fresh orange peel
2 tsp salt
Fideos
1 pound angel hair pasta
1 cup olive oil
4 cups vegetable stock or water
4 cups tomato sauce
1 tbs salt

Make the sauce in large saucepan. Warm the oil, sauté the onion for about 5 minutes and then add the tomato paste and stir for a minute. Then add the wine, pepper or crushed red pepper flakes and currants or raisins. Simmer for 2 minutes and then add the can of plum tomatoes, the cinnamon stick or ground cinnamon, the orange peel, and 2 tsp salt. Bring to a boil and then reduce the heat to low and simmer for 10–15 minutes. Remove the cinnamon stick and orange peels and puree the sauce with an immersion blender or food processor. Adjust the seasonings to your taste.

Break the dry pasta into thirds and line a baking sheet with paper towels. Warm the olive oil in the large sauté pan over medium heat and then add the pasta. Use tongs to stir it until golden brown. Then remove the pasta to the baking sheet and let it drain. You may need to do this in several batches. Drain all but 3 tbs oil (you can save it for another use). In another large saucepan mix the stock or water, sauce, and 1 tbs of the reserved oil and bring to a boil. Add the salt and the browned pasta, cover, and cook over medium-high heat for about 10-15 minutes or until the pasta is al dente or the liquid is absorbed.

Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees, grease a 10 or 11-inch baking pan and spoon the pasta into it. Brush the remaining 2 tbs oil over the coils of pasta and bake for 30 minutes or until the top is crunchy. Serve as either a main dish or with fish or chicken.

Prune Upside Down Cake with Toffee and Sesame

Serves 8

I tried to find recipes for some of the Purim sweets made in Greece and was unsuccessful. This cake recipe is actually made in the South of the United States, but I thought the prunes that some use to make hamantaschen and the sesame, a Middle Eastern ingredient, might be fun to try for Purim.

For the Sesame Prune layer
½ cup light brown sugar
4 tbs unsalted butter
2 tbs apple cider vinegar
Zest of 1 orange
1 tsp vanilla
½ tsp salt
2 tbs sesame seeds
2 cups prunes sliced longways into three parts

For the cake
1½ sticks butter
1 cup packed light brown sugar
2 eggs, room temperature
Zest and juice of 1 orange
2 tbs olive oil
1 tsp apple cider vinegar
1¾ cup all-purpose flour
¾ tsp salt
½ tsp baking soda
¼ tsp baking powder

For the sesame-prune layer, line a 9-inch round cake pan with parchment paper and lightly grease it with baking spray. Place all ingredients except the sesame and prune in a non-reactive pot. Warm over low heat, stirring gently until the butter melts. Then use a whisk, raise the heat to medium and whisk until the mixture turns into caramel and let it simmer for about 1 minute. Then add the sesame seeds and stir to combine. Immediately pour into the bottom of the prepared pan and tilt the pan to cover the bottom evenly. Press the sliced prunes in a decorative pattern in the bottom of the pan, pressing them gently into the caramel layer. Allow to cool completely.

For the cake, first preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Again, use a non-reactive pan to melt the

The Great Resignation is fueling a rabbinic hiring crisis

Asaf Shalev, originally for the JTA

In early December, Judaism's Conservative movement sent a disquieting message to dozens of synagogues looking for a new rabbi: Many of you won't make a hire this year.

At least 80 Conservative synagogues anticipated rabbi vacancies — approximately one of every seven affiliated with the movement, the email said. At most, 50 to 60 rabbis would be looking for new jobs.

"We are not presenting this information to alarm, but rather to help you prepare for and navigate the challenges of this search season," said the email, which was signed by the "career search team" of the Rabbinical Assembly, the Conservative movement's rabbis association, and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the group that represents its nearly 600 congregations.

That email outlined a number of strategies that synagogues, rabbi applicants and movement organizations could adopt to mitigate the challenging job market. But last week, a new message indicated strongly that the mismatch remains acute.

Starting Feb. 1, the new letter said, the Conservative movement is suspending many of the rules that are meant to ensure that Conservative synagogues hire only rabbis trained at the movement's seminaries or who have otherwise applied for and won admission to the Rabbinical Assembly.

Those rules are relaxed late in the hiring season in a typical year, but the accelerated timeline represents a concession that the movement, which has been shrinking for decades, is not fully situated to meet the needs of its congregations right now.

"We understand that this decision will be received with mixed emotions," the latest email said. "This is yet another challenging year both in general, and for rabbinic search specifically."

A confluence of factors has led to this year's tight rabbinical labor market. But one of them seems to be that the Great Resignation — a mass wave of resignations across the United States triggered during the COVID-19 pandemic — has come for the rabbinate, with potentially major implications for American Jewish communities.

In what appears to be a blip, the first year of the pandemic saw fewer retirements of baby-boomer-aged rabbis. Rabbi Ilana Garber, the Rabbinical Assembly's director of global rabbinical development, calls these rabbis "kind souls" who stayed because it was the right thing to do for their congregation during a time of crisis.

This year, there's a bumper crop of retirements, while a thinning out of the next generation that was already underway continues. Denominational seminaries are ordaining fewer clergy, and fewer of those being ordained are choosing to assume the pulpit.

Another dynamic has emerged as the pandemic has worn on: More rabbis are choosing to retire early. And a significant number of rabbis have decided to leave their congregational jobs mid-career, many times with no intention of serving in another pulpit again.

Some of them, in keeping with one theme of the Great Resignation, say they are no longer willing to tolerate unpleasant working conditions. One rabbi told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that "an atmosphere that stifles innovation, enthusiasm and initiative" and the "soul-crushing" experience of low participation in Shabbat and holiday observance in his community drove his decision to leave his synagogue.

Elsewhere, rabbis are seeking to capitalize on the growth of non-traditional work opportunities. One Conservative rabbi who had worked in a Long Island synagogue for eight years decided to leave to launch a consulting firm. Rabbis with more than a decade leading synagogues in New England and Minneapolis announced to their communities that they would leave their roles but remain in the area. And other rabbis told their congregations that they wanted to explore rabbinic work outside of the pulpit.

"Many rabbis have been working tirelessly through the pandemic and are seeking a position with life-work harmony," the December letter cautioned synagogues. "Make sure to communicate your congregation's needs, while also understanding the burnout pervading the entire workplace in 2021, rabbinic and otherwise."

To rabbis on the job market, they wrote, "please communicate from the outset the time off and mental health support you require to perform your best work for your future community."

Garber said she understands rabbinic burnout well. After all, she was experiencing it herself when she left the West Hartford, Connecticut, synagogue where she worked for 15 years shortly before the pandemic to take the Rabbinical Assembly role.

She said she was missing simple things, such as sitting next to her family during services. But she also found that what had drawn her to the rabbinate — the responsibility of supporting Jews at their most vulnerable moments — was working against her.

"After a while, if you don't take care of yourself, each of those vulnerable moments can chip away at you to the point where you're just going through the motions and you're broken," she said.

The pandemic has exacerbated issues of work-life balance for many people. Rabbis, like others across many fields, have taught and counseled via Zoom from their own homes, eroding boundaries that can be tenuous in the best of circumstances. Many have done so with small children at times attending virtual school from adjacent rooms.

Meanwhile, their roles expanded to include becoming health care consultants, responsible for keeping their communities safe from COVID-19, while the in-person gatherings that are the heart of rabbinic leadership have been constrained. More recently, the hostage crisis at a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas, offered a stark reminder that being a rabbi can entail physical risk as well.

"'Can I continue doing this for 20 more years?' If you knew how many good, fulfilled rabbis are asking this question in their souls, with their spouse or partner, and to one another, you would sense that seismic shockwave that potentially faces us," Rabbi Lewis Kamrass wrote in eJewish Philanthropy in October. "It could even be going on within your own congregation or organization."

Kamrass is president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, which represents 2,200 rabbis in the Reform movement, American Jewry's largest denomination. Reform synagogues are also seeing an increased number of openings because of a surge in retirements this year, according to Rabbi Janet Offel, the director of consulting and transition management at the Union for Reform Judaism.

But it is within the Conservative movement where concern is sharpest. The Conservative synagogues hiring this year represent a broad cross-section of the movement, which is home to about 17% of American Jews, according to a recent survey by the Pew Research Center.

Some are growing and adding a second rabbi. Many are in regions that are attractive to Conservative rabbis because they offer Jewish day schools and kosher dining options.

But even some synagogues in major metropolitan areas appear to be struggling to find suitable candidates: A Conservative congregation in Montreal took the unusual step of buying a quarter-page ad in the Jerusalem Post this week to alert its readers that it is seeking a full-time senior rabbi.

Synagogues in areas with dwindling Jewish populations, where few amenities of Jewish life are likely to be present for rabbis and their families, may be having even more trouble drumming up rabbinical candidates. One synagogue in Kalamazoo, Michigan, told its congregants earlier this month that not a single application had come through the Conservative movement hiring system.

In more isolated communities, going without a rabbi could be a blow to organized Jewish life. And hiring a rabbi from outside the Conservative movement could change a synagogue community's character — a reality that the most recent letter from the movement groups suggested guarding against.

"Please remember that non-RA rabbis may have a wide range of attitudes towards halakhah," or Jewish law, which the Conservative movement prioritizes more highly than other non-Orthodox denominations, the latest letter to synagogues said. "We urge you to ask questions about their policies to be sure that the rabbi's views are consistent with Conservative Judaism and your community's values and priorities."

Within the movement, officials expect a substantial number of synagogues to end the hiring season without a new rabbi under contract. Their concern is so acute that a team of 25 leaders has convened to discuss a looming questions: If synagogues can't be reasonably assured of rabbis from within the movement, why should they continue to pay dues to belong to it?

"About a month ago we started really having some serious conversations about this when the numbers made clear to us that this was going to be something we needed to address for this year," Garber said. "We do very much believe in the movement and that we need to strengthen this movement and answer the questions of why should I affiliate with this movement?"

Part of the answer could come with how the Rabbinical Assembly and United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, which effectively merged in 2020, handle synagogues that end up without rabbis. The December letter outlined a range of possibilities, including creating a "cadre of transitional rabbis" to hold positions for a short time; initiating rabbi-sharing and other "outside the box" staff structures; and launching virtual programs "to ease the pressure on clergy."

Garber said the task force — which includes representatives from the movement groups; deans from the Jewish Theological Seminary and American Jewish University, the movement's two seminaries; and rabbis and cantors from various synagogues — had alighted on a plan. She declined to share details but said "an exciting opportunity" will come into play when, in not too long, the search process is resolved and the synagogues without rabbis seek help.

"Then they come to us and say, 'nu?'" she said. "And we'll say, all right, we've got some options for you." ■

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butter over medium heat, stirring frequently and gently and the butter begins to brown. Remove it from the heat and allow to cool completely while assembling the rest of the ingredients. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt and set aside. Cream the cooled browned butter and the brown sugar in a mixer of food processor until light and fluffy. Add the eggs, one at a time and mix just to combine. Then add the zest, the orange juice, olive oil and vinegar and mix just to combine. Add the dry ingredients in 2 additions, mixing just to combine.

Scrape the mixture into the bottom of the prepared pan, level the batter so it covers the caramel portion evenly. Bake for 45–50 minutes, rotate the pan once halfway through the baking. The cake should turn deep golden brown and spring back lightly when pressed lightly. Allow the cake to cool for 10 minutes.

Use potholders or a towel and flip the cake over onto a serving plate, carefully remove the pan. You may need to use a knife to gently separate the layers from the pan. If the prunes stick to the bottom of the pan, simply press them back into place. Again, allow 10–15 minutes to finish cooling before slicing the cake. . ■

The first urban Jewish cohousing project in the US takes shape in Berkeley

Sue Fishkoff, originally from J. The Jewish News of Northern California via JTA

Clean lines, a four-story building arranged around an open courtyard, and parking spaces for 50 bicycles are all part of the recently completed design for Berkeley Moshav, an intentional Jewish cohousing community planned for a 2024 opening in Berkeley, California.

The community submitted plans to the city in mid-December, and groundbreaking should begin in 18 months, said project organizer Roger Studley. The first residents should be able to move in by late 2024.

When they do, they will be moving into the country's first urban Jewish cohousing community.

No other location besides Berkeley was considered, Studley said. From the first living-room meeting of 19 interested families almost eight years ago, the idea was to build their future home walking distance from the city's two downtown synagogues — Netivot Shalom and Beth Israel — and to take advantage of Berkeley's growing Jewish population, as well as its history of social and spiritual innovation.

Upon completion, the project will have 36 to 39 units, depending on the final configuration of several one-and two-bedroom homes. Seven family units have committed to move in so far, and several more are being tabbed as "explorers," those taking a few months to meet their prospective neighbors and decide whether the community is right for them.

In a cohousing community, residents are expected to take part in certain communal activities. They all own the building and the land in common, so decisions about the community overall are decided in monthly meetings. Residents don't have to attend the meetings but must abide by the decisions.

The cohousing movement started in Denmark in the 1960s and came to the United States a generation later. Muir Commons, established in Davis, California, in 1991, is the oldest such community in the country. There are now some 170 cohousing communities nationwide, and while a few are faith-based, just one is intentionally Jewish: Living Tree Alliance, a kibbutz-inspired farmland in Moretown, Vermont, which comprises a handful of homes.

Berkeley Moshav is quite different, both in scale (large and urban) and in lifestyle (well, Berkeley).

Following the model of the Israeli moshav, members will own their own homes with all shared space held in common. That will include a 5,000-square-foot outdoor courtyard; 3,000 square feet of indoor space for amenities such as art and fitness studios; a rooftop terrace for Jewish ritual celebrations; and two communal kitchens: one dairy and one meat. There will be 24 parking spaces, but 12 will be reserved for ride-share vehicles — that's both to keep expenses down and to honor the project's commitment to sustainability, Studley said.

Architect's rendering of Berkeley Moshav. (Courtesy of Berkeley Moshav)

Discussions are ongoing regarding the Jewish character of the community, which will be open to non-Jews as well. From the beginning, Studley said, the idea was to accommodate all observance levels and none, but that's more complicated than it sounds. He said there will be "a Shabbat vibe" in the common areas, but what does that mean in practice? And kashrut details for the communal kitchens will be worked out as membership evolves; what residents do in their private homes is up to them. These are all works in progress, to be decided and re-decided by the community itself.

That's part of what attracted Noah Brod, 35, and Hilary Jacobsen, 33, to the prospect. The couple served together in the Peace Corps in El Salvador, which is where they got their first taste of communal living: 14 people of multiple generations in a four-bedroom house.

"It was a pretty profound revelation to us," Brod said. "This is how most of the world lives. It made us more open to the idea of intentional communities."

And while that living style has its ups and downs, he said, "It's a rich way to live your life."

The idea of being multigenerational appeals to them. "We are looking for a place to raise a family, with other parents around," Brod said. The Jewish character is also key for them. Jacobsen has deep roots in the East Bay Jewish community; her grandmother, the late Ilene Weinreb, was a local philanthropist and activist, serving on the boards of the East Bay Jewish federation and Berkeley Hillel, among others.

The two are still in the "explorer" stage with Berkeley Moshav, "crunching the numbers," as Brod put it.

Prices have gone up since the location on San Pablo Avenue was announced in 2019. They are now projected to range from $880,000 for a one-bedroom to $1.6 million for three-bedroom units. Studley explained that these are market-rate homes, and the prices are estimates of what they will go for three years from now. Also, they are being built to the future homeowners' specifications, and will be sold at cost.

"What I like is that it's a discussion," Brod said of the process. "Everything else in the Bay Area is: 'Here's the price, take it or leave it, you're lucky to get anything.' I'm really happy there is this option for us even to explore."

Elly Valas, 72, signed on to Berkeley Moshav two years ago. A former small-business consultant, she lives in Denver, but has two sisters in Berkeley and a lot of other family in the state. She and some college friends have been talking about cohousing for decades, but now that she's single and getting older, it has become a priority.

"I don't want to age alone," she said. She's looked at some elder cohousing communities, but that doesn't appeal to her. "I don't want to live in an old-age home."

She has friends and family who have lived on kibbutz, some for years, and she said she's "always thought it was a great way to live. I've seen how it can work, and I'm familiar with the challenges.

"I'd say I'm the most involved" of the seven confirmed Berkeley Moshav members, she said, noting that she is on the marketing committee, the design and development committee, and writes the newsletter.

The challenge now is finding more people to commit to the project. Construction can begin once 75 percent of the homes are spoken for, which means they need 20 more families or individuals to sign on.

Word is spreading, however. Valas got a call last week from a man boarding a plane to Hawaii, who said he'd found out about Berkeley Moshav from the bulletin board at Congregation Beth El in Berkeley.

"I think there are many people waiting on the sidelines to see what it will look like, what kind of Jewish community it will be," she mused.

"I think this is the way we are meant to live," Studley said. "We are so much happier when we have a place to connect, where we belong." ■

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In Manhattan, 24 women artists celebrate 24 women rabbis who blazed a trail

Emily Jaeger, originally for the New York Jewish Week via JTA

The glass ceiling of rabbinical ordination was broken at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnatti in 1972 when Rabbi Sally J. Priesand became America's first female rabbi.

Fifty years later, HUC's New York City branch is celebrating the milestone with an exhibit at its Dr. Bernard Heller Museum. The exhibition, called "Holy Sparks," pairs 24 female rabbis — all "firsts" of some kind — with 24 female Jewish artists asked to portray their stories.

A collaboration between HUC and The Braid (formerly Jewish Women's Theatre), a Santa Monica, Calif.-based Jewish theater company, "Holy Sparks" reflects upon the radical and essential shifts in Judaism over the past five decades through the inclusion and rising profile of female rabbis.

The artworks — which span a variety of mediums and aesthetics, including photography and mixed-media collage — work as the jeweled tiles of a larger mosaic, portraying the women's often-difficult journey to the rabbinate, along with their tireless work to build a better Judaism.

Some of the included artists had long, close friendships with their rabbis; others referenced transcripts and videos provided by The Braid. The artists only had to follow one rule: keep their pieces within the dimensions of 24"x 30" for easy transport. With its next stop at the Skirball Museum in Cincinnati, "Holy Sparks" is intended as a traveling exhibit, to share the story of these inspirational women internationally.

For Jean Bloch Rosensaft, director of Heller Museum — located at HUC's campus in Greenwich Village — the exhibition represents the culmination of a three-year project. The museum was initially approached by the leaders of The Braid to transform "The Story Archive of Women Rabbis," a filmed collection of 200 interviews, into works of original art by contemporary women artists.

Rosensaft and her curatorial team had the difficult task of winnowing down the profiles to a manageable number; they then arranged the 24 "pairings" of artists and subjects. Artists were intentionally chosen with diverse aesthetics, including Debra Band, who is known for intricate paper cuttings, and Judy Sirota Rosenthal, who is known for mixed media installations. The result, according to Rosensaft, is one of "unity without uniformity."

"'Holy Sparks' shares our deep sense of appreciation and gratitude to women in the rabbinate, for the journey they have taken and struggles [they] confronted," she told the New York Jewish Week.

Photographer Joan Roth captures Priesand with a subdued photograph that is overlaid with a famous quote from the rabbi: "The world moves forward every day because someone is willing to take the risk."

In the photo, Priesand simply stands on the bimah, the raised stage at the front of a synagogue, as a trickle of rainbow light plays on the wall next to her. The picture exudes a quiet power: She is right where she belongs.

The exhibit then progresses chronologically by ordination year. Featured rabbis include Rabbi Kinneret Shiryon (ordained in 1981), the first woman to serve as a community rabbi in Israel, and Rabbi Denise L. Eger (1988), the first gay person to serve as president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. "The order is intended to manifest how each generation and decade of women rabbis have built on the previous decade," Rosensaft said.

What's striking about the pieces in "Holy Sparks" is how well they work together, despite the wide range of materials and styles. They all grapple with the intersections of Judaism and feminism, and many highlight art forms that were, for centuries, considered simply "women's work," such as embroidery and weaving. Each individual piece reflects on crucial elements of a rabbi's essence: her being, her words, her tradition, her actions, her devotion to her community.

The process could be difficult at times. Painter Marilee Tolwin, for example, struggled to encompass the essence of Rabbi Rachel Adler — one of the first ethicists to interpret Jewish texts through a feminist lens — on a mere 24" x 30" canvas. Her piece evokes both Agnes Martin's modernist grid paintings and micrography, a Jewish form of calligraphy where quotations written in tiny Hebrew letters are used to create designs. Tolwin copied Adler's entire landmark feminist essay, "The Jew Who Wasn't There," in miniature and overlaid it with the structure of a Talmud page.

"I stood back and saw which sentence had fallen in the center: 'From which women are anatomically excluded,'" Tolwin said. "It was bashert [destiny], the essence of Rabbi Adler's life work."

For Emily Bowen Cohen, the Jewish and Native American cartoonist behind the mini-comic "An American Indian Guide to the Day of Atonement," working on a single canvas for her painting, "Rabbi Julie" — about Julie S. Schwartz, the first woman rabbi to serve on active duty as a chaplain in the U.S. military — meant departing from her medium entirely. "Working on this portrait challenged me to communicate a whole story on just one page," she said.

Her solution: twist an entire book of comic panels behind the portrait of the rabbi. Schwartz had to juggle the regimented image of a naval chaplain with her radical role as first woman rabbi serving on active duty. Inspired by the aesthetic of naval advertisements from the 1940s, "Rabbi Julie" evokes a Jewish Rosie the Riveter, optimistic and bursting out from the traditional framework patterned behind her.

As with many ventures touting diversity of representation, there are notable omissions. There are no pieces dedicated to Rabbi Lauren Tuchman, the first blind woman rabbi; Rabbi Sandra Lawson, one of the first openly queer, Black rabbis and the inaugural director of Racial Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for the Reconstructionist movement, or Rabbi Emily Aviva Kapor, the first trans woman rabbi.

With any luck and wisdom, we won't have to wait until the 100th anniversary of women's ordination to celebrate these trailblazers. As Rosensaft writes about the 24 women rabbis chosen for the exhibit, "May these builders of a vital Jewish future go from strength to strength."

"Holy Sparks: Celebrating 50 Years of Women in the Rabbinate" is on view at the Dr. Bernard Heller Museum, 1 West 4th St., New York, from Feb. 1 through May 22. ■

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Obituaries

Marlene Gitelman z"l, a remembrance

By Nehama Glogower"Say little and do much and receive every person with a kindly appearance" Avot 1:15

This rabbinic dictum captures Marlene Gitelman, a quiet pillar of the Ann Arbor Jewish community.

A native of Detroit, Marlene Cern graduated Mumford High School. Her family were dedicated members of Young Israel of Northwest Detroit. While a student at Wayne State

University, she volunteered in Israel following the Six Day War, extending her stay so she could continue to work on Kibbutz Tirat Zvi in the Beit She'an Valley. The family's love and attachment to Israel was cemented when her parents, David and Sarah, moved to Israel in 1969, along with Marlene's sister Naomi, joining her brother Yehuda, who was getting his PhD at the Weizmann Institute.

Marlene completed a BA in Education from Wayne State University. She met Zvi Gitelman, a newly appointed professor at the University of Michigan; they soon married and made their home in Ann Arbor. The Orthodox Jewish community was tiny and met at the Michigan Hillel building.

When the children Yitzhak and Miriam were born, the Gitelmans and a few other families recognized a need for a Jewish school in Ann Arbor, one that could provide intensive Hebrew and Jewish education, alongside outstanding secular studies. Thus, the Hebrew Day School of Ann Arbor was born. Marlene became the head of the school. Under her steady guidance the school grew and became an important anchor of Jewish life in Ann Arbor.

To say that Marlene poured her heart and soul into the school doesn't even begin to capture the depth of her commitment. She was principal for 18 years, providing leadership and a solid foundation for the school, parents, teachers, and students. She was deeply committed to Jewish education, to Israel, and to making a school where everyone on the Jewish spectrum of observance could feel safe and comfortable. She cared deeply about children.

Marlene did not seclude herself in the principal's office. You would find her setting up the Purim carnival or the Passover seder or removing hazardous spills from the hallway. She knew what was going on in each classroom, she knew each child. In her quiet modest way she modeled mentshlichkeit (decency) in the best possible way.

Marlene was always on the lookout for needs in the community and then volunteered to do what needed to be done. Many organizations, especially the Ann Arbor Orthodox Minyan, benefitted from her efforts. She never shirked what she considered to be her responsibility. Whether it was shopping for Kiddush foods or rebinding ragged prayer books, she did it.

The Gitelman home was welcoming to all. Her cooking was excellent, her baking legendary. She learned her skills in the kitchen of her Hungarian grandmother. At Shabbat and holiday meals there was always room for "just one more."

Marlene embarked on a new career as a cataloguer at the University of Michigan Library after leaving the Hebrew Day School. Her colleagues, Beth Snyder and Feyza Sayman described her work:

Marlene provided rich and meticulous cataloging and sound oversight for Judaica technical processing. She mentored numerous student catalogers and interns, developed relationships with vendors and donors, and worked closely with faculty and students. Anyone who spent even a little time in Marlene's company sensed her deep commitment to and expert knowledge of the collections and her passion for her work. It was always a treat to hear Marlene tell about the history and variety of collection materials she encountered over the years. She cataloged modern as well as rare materials dating back to the 14th century, in a plethora of languages (not only Hebrew and Yiddish) and formats, including more unusual media like matzo and chocolate. Marlene retired from the library at the end of 2016.

Marlene always had an appreciation for the arts and nature. She was a dedicated photographer, beginning at an early age. She loved animals and even snuck a kitten into the house, until she could convince her dad that it really was okay to have a pet. She was the kid who would bring home injured sparrows and nurse them back to health.

When the grandkids came along she hosted "Camp Savta" every summer. She prepared cool activities and adventures for them, somehow fitting the whole age range. You can see everyone's face beaming into the photographs.

An important Jewish value is Hakarat ha-tov, recognizing beneficial actions and thanking someone. Marlene never really let us thank her adequately in her lifetime, but we owe her a huge debt. She set an example of devotion and commitment that is hard to match. She enriched our lives in so many ways. It would honor her memory to resolve to be part of the solution, not part of the problem, just as she was.

She is survived by her husband of 52 years, Zvi; children, Yitzhak (Jennifer), and Miriam (Uri), grandchildren Eitan, Noah, Sara, David, Yakira, and Ben, and her brother Yehuda and sister Naomi. ■

Simchas and Sorrows

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends condolences to:

Jared (Julia) Hoffert on the death of his father, Myles B. Hoffert, and grandfather of Sarah, January 18.
The family and friends of Marlene Gitelman, January 24.
Barbara Stark-Nemon on the death of her cousin, David Fauman, January 25.
Sandra Finkel on the death of her brother-in-law, Sanford P. Flayer, January 28.
Denise Thal on the death of her father, Bruce Thal, January 31.
Shana (Kevin) Olson on the death of her grandfather, Seymour (Sy) Salinger, and great-grandfather to Nina, Eli, Lilah, and Ezra, February 2.
Mario (Naomi) Spivak on the death of his father, Leiser Spivak, and grandfather of Maya (JP) and Eitan, February 2.
The family and friends of Carol Amster, February 12.

The Washtenaw Jewish community sends mazel tovs to:

Sally Adler on the birth of grandchild #11 on November 22, 2021. Jillian Rikki is the daughter of Rebekah and Justin Gamble of Ypsilanti and sister of Jordyn and Jenna. Jillian Rikki is also the granddaughter of the late Richard Adler, who was called Ricky by his family, hence Jillian's middle name Rikki.
Claire Weiner and Kirk Brower on the birth of their grandson, Samuel Paul Lesser, January 3
David Uhlmann and Virginia Murphy on the engagement of their daughter, Emily Uhlmann to Jake Cinti.
Ruth Petit on the birth of her granddaughter, Camden Vignoe Petit, January 15
Leslie and Mark Rosenwasser on the birth and adoption of their granddaughter, Stella Heart, January 16
Neal and Susan Weinberg on the birth of their grandson, Elliott Martin Weinberg, January 25
Debbie and Lev Linkner on the marriage of their son, and to Lauren Linkner (Dan Sherick), and Adam (Lauren) Linkner on the marriage of their brother, Alexander Linkner to Jill Peck on January 21
Fran & Irwin Martin on the birth of their granddaughter, Haiden Arielle Tomasvich, daughter of Stacey Martin & Datus Tomasvich.
Cheryl & Mark Good on the marriage of their daughter, Miranda Good, and Colin Nelson.
Alan Lampear and Anita Liberman-Lampear welcomed Lavey Benjamin Lampear, son of Ari Lampear and Caren Minkoff, little brother of Eva and Ammi.
Stanton Elias and Donna Shewach on the birth of their grandson, Yehuda Ivgi, son of Chana and Shimon Ivgi of Be'er Sheva, Israel, and brother of Liba, Yisrael, Avigail, Yosef Meir and Elisheva Hodaya.

CAROL AMSTER, 86, of Ann Arbor, Michigan, died February 12. Mrs. Amster is survived by her sons and daughters-in-law, Aaron and Susan Amster, and Barry and Jaye Amster; daughter and son-in-law, Lisa and Doug Schoenberg; grandchildren, Lauren Amster and Angus Abrams, Joshua and Jenna Amster, Michael Amster, Zachary Amster, Adam Schoenberg, and Allison Schoenberg; sister, Andrea Puterman. She was the beloved wife of 54 years of the late Herbert S. Amster. Interment in Beth Israel Memorial Gardens at Arborcrest Cemetery. Contributions may be directed to Jewish Family Service of Ann Arbor, The Amster Center, 2245 South State Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, jfsannarbor.org/donate, or Jewish Federation of Greater Ann Arbor, 2939 Birch Hollow Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48108, www.jewishannarbor.org/ways-to-give, or A Charity of one's choice. ■

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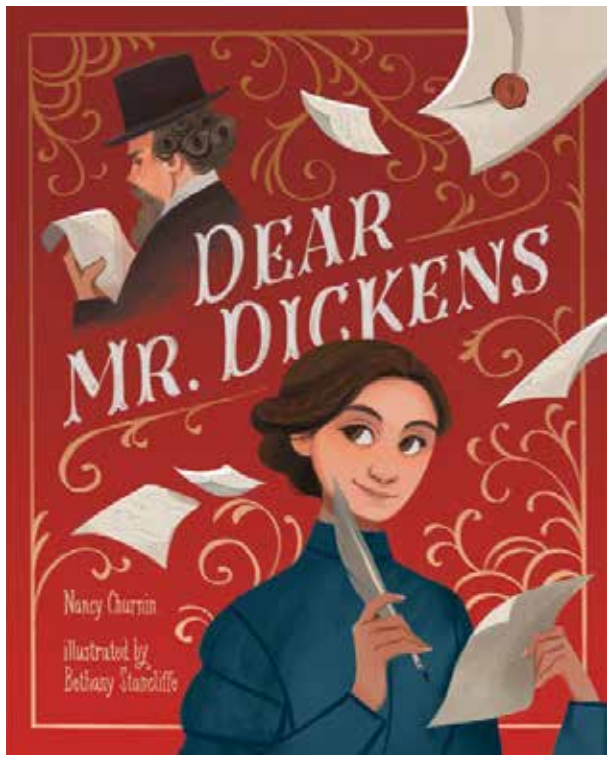
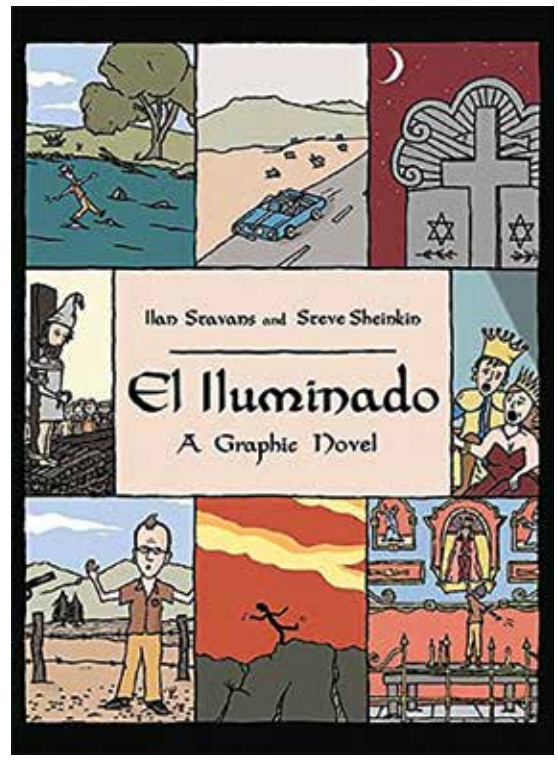
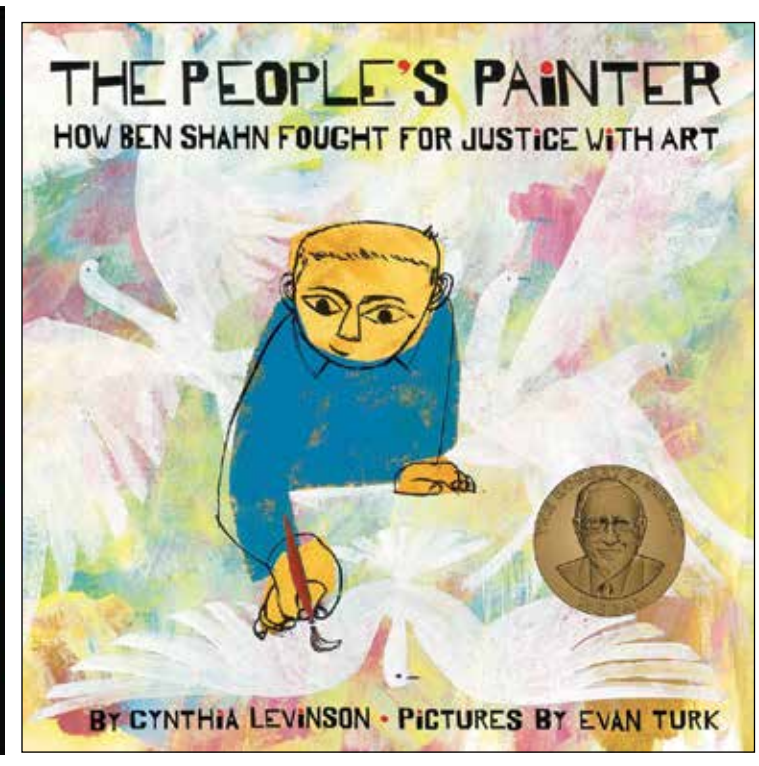
Outstanding new books in the TBE library

By Clare Kinberg, TBE librarian

The Sydney Taylor Jewish Book Awards for 2022 were announced in late January, honoring 21 picture books, middle school, and young adult books published last year. Several of these award winning and notable books are now in the Temple Beth Emeth library ready to be savored. The TBE library is primarily used by TBE religious school students, but its 5000-plus resources are available to anyone in the community.







The people's painter: Ben Shahn's artful stories of life in America, Cynthia Levinson's illustrated (by Evan Turk) biography aimed at 4- to 8-year-olds is a complete delight for any age. The complex picture book begins with Shahn's life in an observant and activist family in Lithuania, follows his development and training as an artist, and illustartes his commitment to social and economic justice. The book joins several others on or about Ben Shahn in the TBE library, including the gorgeous *Ben Shahn's New Deal murals: Jewish identity in the American scene*; *The complete graphic works of Ben Shahn*; and another favorite book for all ages, his illustrated *The alphabet of creation: an ancient legend from the Zohar*.

Prolific children's book author Nancy Churnin won two Sydney Taylors this year, a silver award for *Dear Mr. Dickens*, and her *A Queen to the Rescue: The Story of Henrietta Szold, Founder of Hadassah* was a Sydney Taylor notable book for 2022. *Dear Mr. Dickens* tells the story of young Eliza Davis' correspondence with Charles Dickens about how antisemitism was reflected in Dicken's portrayal of the Fagin character in *Oliver Twist*. As a result of Davis' wise insistence, Dickens revised the book, and in future books included a variety of Jewish characters. *Dear Mr. Dickens* is a brilliantly told important story for our times. In addition to Churnin's new youth biography of Henrietta Szold, the TBE library includes two more of her recent youth biographies, *Irving Berlin: the immigrant boy who made America sing* and *Martin & Anne: the Kindred Spirits of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Anne Frank*.

Also new in the library are several notable "graphic novels," two by Ken Krimstein. His first graphic novel, *The three escapes of Hannah Arendt*, is a work of art. His most recent is *When I Grow Up*, a stunning graphic narrative of newly discovered stories from Jewish teens on the cusp of WWII. Based on six of hundreds of newly discovered, never-before-published autobiographies of Eastern European Jewish teens on the brink of WWII found in 2017 hidden in a Lithuanian church cellar. These autobiographies, long thought destroyed by the Nazis, were written as entries for three competitions held in Eastern Europe in the 1930s. In *When I Grow Up*, Krimstein shows us the stories of these six young men and women in riveting, almost cinematic narratives, full of humor, yearning, ambition, and all the angst of the teenage years. Ken Krimstein's newest work reveals how the tragedy that is about to befall these young people could happen again, to any of us.

New to the TBE library, but published in 2008, Ilan Stavans and Steve Sheinkin's graphic novel *El Iluminado*, is a successful collaboration between two particularly special Jewish creatives. The multi-talented Stavans is a Mexican-Jewish essayist, editor, translator, and memoirist and on the faulty at Amherst College. Among the other books by Stavans in the TBE library are two volumes he edited, *The Oxford book of Jewish stories* (1998) and *Oy, caramba!: an anthology of Jewish stories from Latin America* (2016). The library also has his Torah commentary, *With all thine heart: love and the Bible* (2010). Sheinkin specializes in middle grade and young adult graphic novels and non-fiction on quirky fascinating themes. Many TBE fourth graders are familiar with his humorous graphic series *The Adventures of Rabbi Harvey: Jewish Wit and Wisdom in the Wild West* (currently 11 copies are on loan, lost, or missing). Another book by Sheinkin in the library is *Most dangerous: Daniel Ellsberg and the secret history of the Vietnam War*, his 2015 young adult history of the Pentagon Papers.

Want to learn more about new books in the TBE library? Join me on Sunday evenings, 6 to 7 p.m. during TBE religious school in the library for a "Sunday Salon" discussion of books and current events. What are you reading? ■

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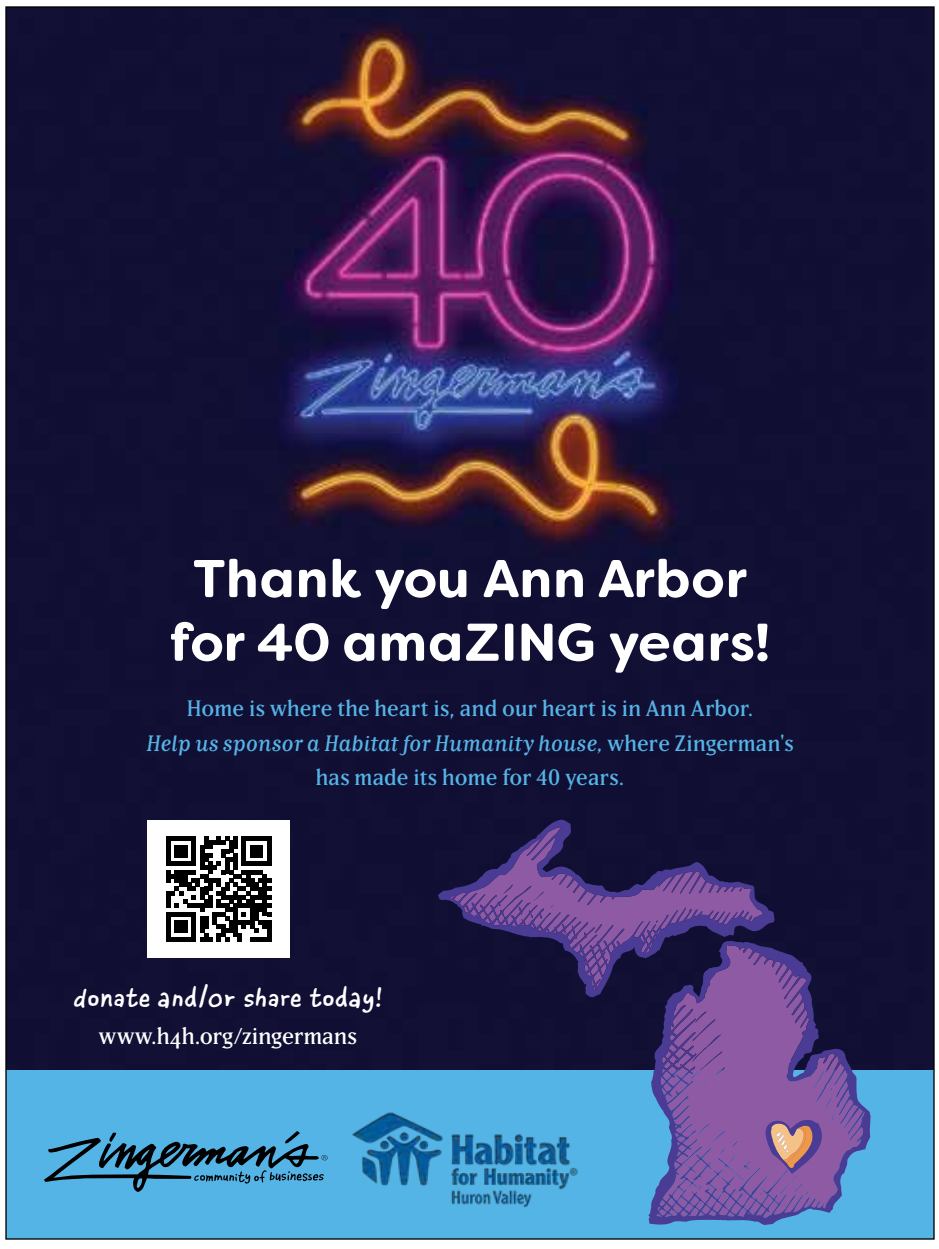
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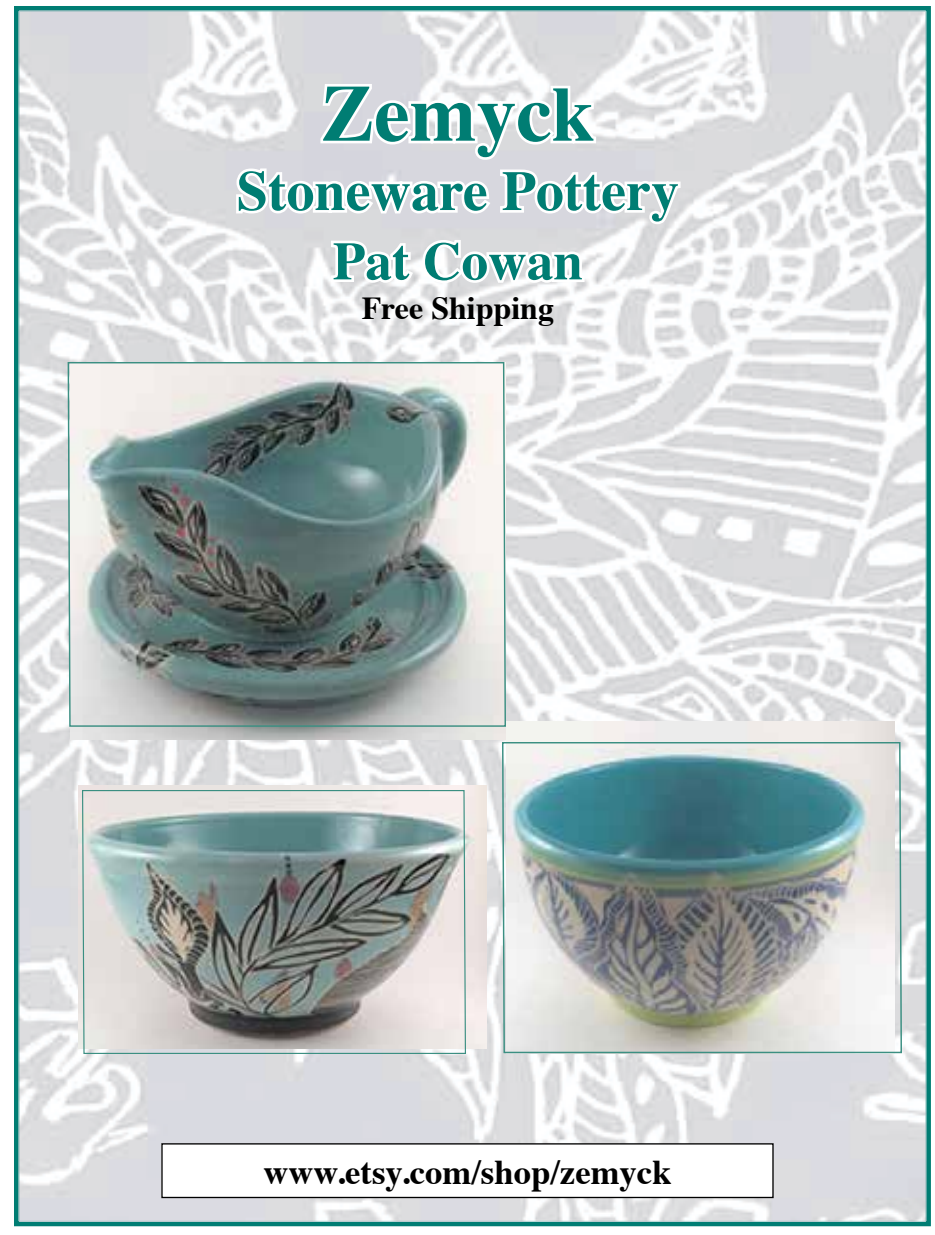
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